August / September 1995 $4.50

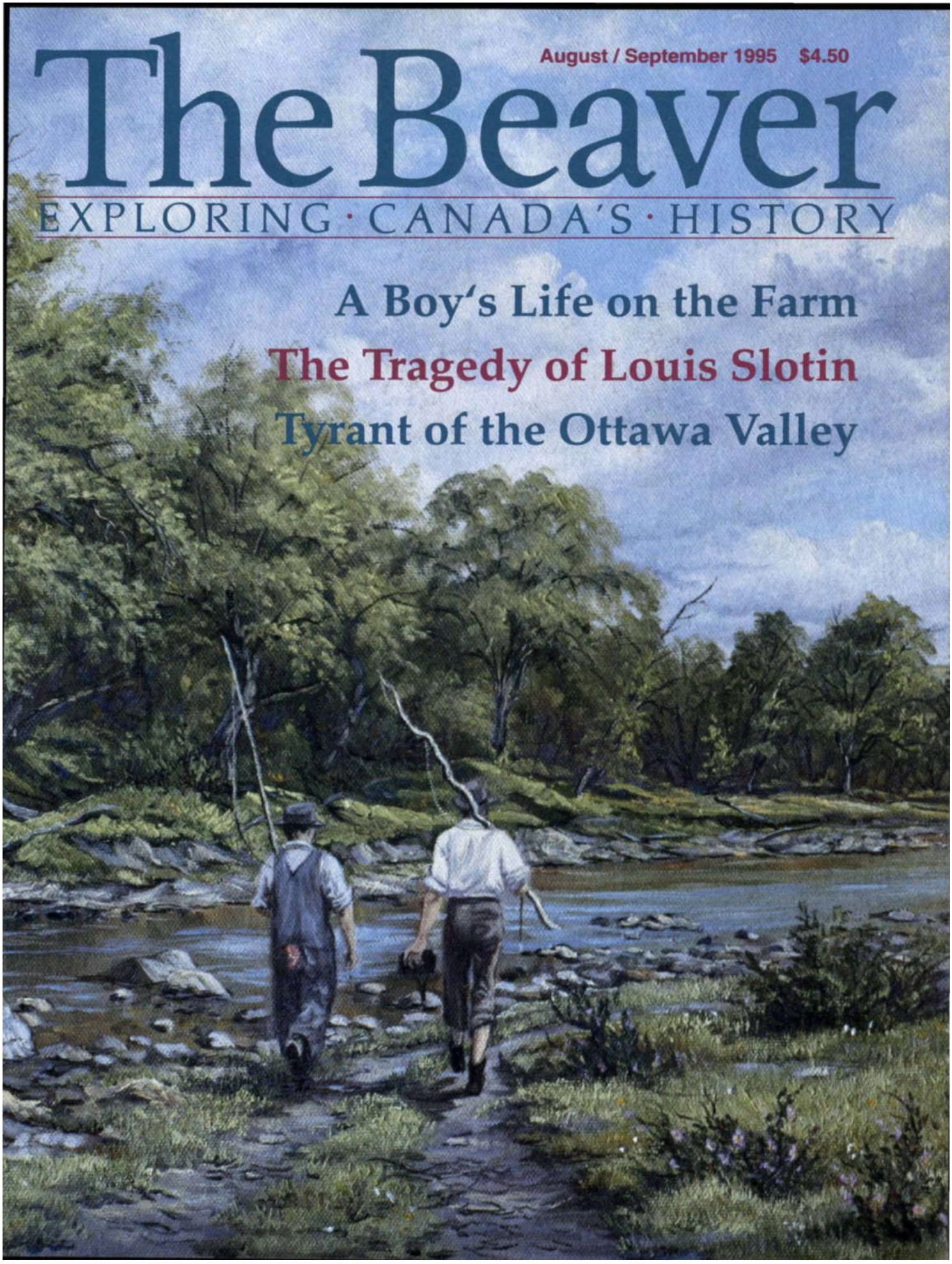
The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

A Boy's Life on the Farm

The Tragedy of Louis Slotin

Tyrant of the Ottawa Valley



MUSEUM PROFILE

New Brunswick Museum

277 Douglas Avenue, Saint John, NB E2K 1E5 • Telephone: 1-506-643-2300 • Fax: 1-506-643-236

THE NEW BRUNSWICK MUSEUM (NBM), Canada's oldest continuing museum, is preparing for a major expansion in April 1996. The expansion will be located in Market Square, one of the country's most beautiful complexes in the heart of Saint John.

The expansion will house History, Natural Sciences and Art Galleries, a Discovery Gallery and anchor the Museum's provincial Outreach Program of travelling exhibitions. The Social History Gallery tells the story of New Brunswick's people (the Aboriginal, Acadians and Loyalists). The significant role of 19th-century shipbuilding and transportation industries is the focus of the Marine Gallery and the Industry Gallery follows the economic development of the province.

The Natural Science Galleries focus on the special relationship between humans and marine mammals, particularly whales in the Marine Mammals Gallery. A hiking trail leads you from the beginning of Earth history through to the end of the last Ice Age in the Changing Earth Gallery and a "back porch"

Facade of NBM's Market Square Expansion

perch highlight's New Brunswick birds.

Showcasing the Art Galleries (Fine Arts Gallery and the Applied and Decorative Art Gallery) is the work of New Brunswick artisans. The Outreach Program takes the NBM to people in their own communities through exhibits, presentations, education and training programs.

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Membership in Canada's National History Society provides reduced admission to the following leading Canadian museums:

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- Vancouver Museum
- Glenbow Museum, Calgary
- Provincial Museum of Alberta, Edmonton
- Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, Saskatoon
- Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg
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- Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec
- New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick
- Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, N.S.

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Canada's National History Society

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The booklet describes how W.W. II changed everything. It left Canada and the U.S. the two richest nations in the world. Canadians came of age and accepted responsibilities in, to and for the world and earned a reputation as "useful fixers". The booklet helps us remember those who paid in full for what their country gained.

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THE BEAVER: Exploring Canada's History (ISSN 0005-7517), founded in 1920 by the Hudson's Bay Company, is published bi-monthly by Canada's National History Society, #478-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 0T6. Phone: (204) 988-9300. Fax: (204) 988-9309.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: (6 issues) $25.00 (Canada and United States). SINGLE COPY $4.50. OTHER COUNTRIES ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION $32.00.

Manitoba Residents: Add 7% PST ($1.64 on 1-year subscription: $2.94 on 2-year; $3.93 on 3-year).

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES: Call Toll Free 1-800-816-6777.

CANADIAN POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, #478-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0T6.

PUBLICATIONS MAIL REGISTRATION NO. 1401.

U.S. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, c/o H.A. & J.L. Wood, Inc., Box 329, Pembina, North Dakota 58271-0329.

U.S. SECOND-CLASS MAIL REGISTRATION NUMBER: USPS 759-610.

Second class postage paid at Winnipeg and at Pembina, North Dakota.

While every care will be taken of manuscripts and illustrations submitted, no liability will be assumed for loss.

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GST Registration Number: R 138681408.

Issued July 1995

PRINTED IN CANADA

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Exploring Canada's History

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Annals of *The Beaver*

In August 1950 the eminent author John Murray Gibbon, chronicler of the CPR, wrote to Clifford Wilson, editor of *The Beaver,* on a delicate topic:

> In my paper on "The Orkneyman in Canada" delivered to the Royal Society at Kingston I credited some quotations to *The Beaver,* with a capital *T* for the preliminary particle of the title. You kindly sent me copies of some issues of your magazine for that purpose. The manuscript is being prepared for publication as a Transaction, and the Associate Editor of the University of Toronto Press advises that the correct form for the title of your magazine is "the *Beaver*". She quotes as her authority the Oxford University

> Press which says: — "As a rule, print the definite article in roman, as the *Graphic,* the *Daily News. The Times* is to be an exception, as that newspaper prefers to have it so." Would you kindly advise me whether you wish to be called "the *Beaver*" or "*The Beaver*". Yours sincerely...

It was an innocent enough request, but, as is usual with innocent requests, it proved to be something of a land-mine. Clifford Wilson replied on 21 August:

> Dear Mr. Gibbon, I do prefer the *Beaver* with a small *t*. It looks a bit pretentious otherwise I always think. I don't see why it should make any difference whether the title of the publication has two words or one, although in the case of *The Times* it does look better to see the two capital *T*s. Would you refer to us, therefore, as the *Beaver.*

That seemed straightforward enough, but Dr. Gibbon must have felt his mind giving way when he reached the bottom of the page. The editor had concluded his letter with the following words: "Yours faithfully, For the Hudson's Bay Company, Clifford P. Wilson, Editor, *The Beaver*" — with a capital *T*. Either the editor had suffered a change of heart or his secretary had had one for him.

In any case, Wilson, the Associate Editor of the University of Toronto Press and the experts at Oxford were overruled. Someone has written in pencil over the daybook copy of Wilson's letter "Mr. Payne thinks *'The Beaver'* should be continued."

A later editor, Malvina Bolus, was so moved by the threat of a small *t* when she came across the Wilson heresy in 1968 that she wrote across the bottom of the letter in ink "Registered trade mark is *The Beaver* so there is no choice".

The title of this magazine, with or without the capital *T*, has been a problem since at least 1920 when the first issue was published. At one point, when the magazine was being planned by its first editor, C.M. Thomas, the title *Hudson's Bay Blanket* was considered, which, if adopted, might well have led to problems. In the 1930s, when the direction of the magazine was being changed, thought was given to adopting a new title, but it was recognized that the title had somehow established itself, even though some thought it a queer name for a magazine. *The Beaver*? Some sort of animal magazine?

Puccini apparently considered it a suitable title for a periodical. In the first act of his opera *La Boheme* the poet Rudolfo is asked to join his friends at a restaurant. He replies that he is too busy. He has to complete his article for *The Beaver.* Nothing in our archive indicates that anyone called Rudolfo ever wrote for the magazine or that C.M. Thomas was an opera enthusiast. His choice of the title had to do with the importance of the rodent to the rise of the Hudson's Bay Company and the development of early Canada. Canada was founded on the fur trade and the fur trade was founded on the back of the beaver. If it had been possible in the seventeenth century to make felt hats from the pelts of chipmunks Canada might have had another symbol and this magazine might have had another title.

Nevertheless, the name of *The Beaver* has caused trouble over the years. People do tend to think that it might be a magazine about animals and every year half a dozen or so unsolicited manuscripts on the hunting methods of the raccoon, the mating habits of the skunkbear or wolverine, or the curious activities of some other creature of forest, plain or tundra, arrive at our editorial offices, usually without a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

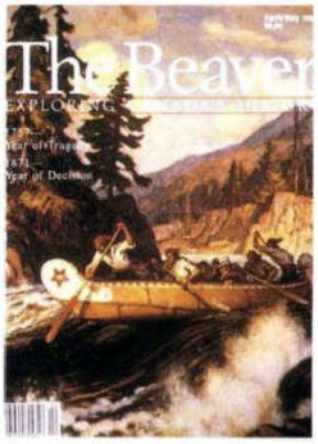
The question of great *T* or little *t* rages on, just as it did in the days of Clifford Wilson and John Murray Gibbon. Our cover and contents page both make it perfectly clear that the magazine is officially called *The Beaver,* with a capital *T* and a capital *B*. Just the same, some insist on calling it, simply, *Beaver,* without embellishment. In lists of magazines if appears as *Beaver,* as it does in catalogues, almanacs and directories. People who have not yet had the pleasure must wonder what sort of publication *Beaver* is.

Unfortunately, there are people who come to the conclusion that it must be some sort of pornographic magazine or a periodical for nudists. Some self-appointed humorists who clearly know exactly what sort of magazine it is pretend that they don't and send the editor rude photographs and clippings, which once caused consternation at the front desk and are now consigned to the trash bin with a yawn and a groan. It is a boring old joke by now, but every few months another fool imagines that he is the first to think of it.

While *The Beaver* may be an appropriate title for a magazine about Canada, it has been felt over the years that the title alone does not convey enough information, if any, about what the magazine actually contains. It might be argued that titles such as *Atlantic Monthly, Maclean's* and *Punch* are equally vague about their contents. Who would guess, for example, that *Maclean's* is a news magazine? There is nothing there to suggest headlines and up-to-the-minute reports on current events.

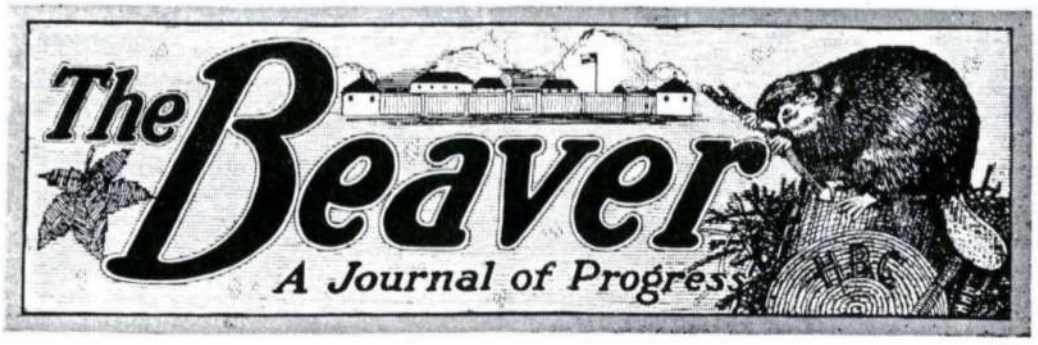
In the case of *The Beaver,* sub-titles have been employed to better convey the nature of the magazine. In the 1920s *The Beaver,* as a Hudson's Bay Company staff magazine, was subtitled "A Journal of Progress", possibly to indicate that the HBC, in spite of being 250 years old, was really an up-to-date, go-ahead company with modern ideas.

Later, when Douglas MacKay transformed *The Beaver* into a magazine about HBC history and current activities, the subtitle became "A Magazine of the North" and the journal developed an international reputation for its depiction and interpretation of Northern matters.



When the magazine expanded its scope to cover more regions of Canada, the subtitle "Magazine of the North" suggested that *The Beaver*'s territory was the Northern portion of North America — that is, Canada.

In 1985 the decision was made to change direction once again with a new focus on Canadian history in all its aspects and in all its periods and regions. At this point some thought was also given to the possibility of changing the title to something such as *Canada's History* or *History Canada.* It was decided, however, that a change of title would be a betrayal of almost 70 years of publishing history, and that it would be unwise to turn away from a well-earned reputation for quality and an established readership. The beaver, after all, was an old and well-loved Canadian symbol and *The Beaver* was by way of being a Canadian institution. It would be wiser to build on what had gone before and, with luck, bring the traditional readership along on the new venture. The magazine's subtitle was changed to "Exploring Canada's History" at the suggestion of historian Michael Bliss, and over the decade since then, the magazine has explored many pathways and byways of Canada's story and increased its paid subscription list from fewer than 20,000 to over 40,000 and growing. Seventy-five years on, it remains *The Beaver* — with a capital *T*. ◆



When I see black and white photographs of the prairie, whether from Depression times or earlier, and note how bleak everything looks, I realize that anyone who had not lived in that period would think that it was desolate. In fact, the prairie was colourful for much of the year.

Admittedly, our south-western Manitoba farm was a little bleak while the snow was still drifted around the buildings, but the sun was strong, and soon the snow was gone and green shoots were appearing. There was a natural prairie pasture east of the buildings with a slough at the north end. Before long the pasture and road allowances were covered with prairie crocuses, buttercups and three-flowered avens. In the evening the chorus of frogs in the slough could be heard, while from a ridge to the south prairie chickens performed their mating dance. Every spring snow geese fed in the fields morning and evening and wild mallards and pintails nested near the slough, sometimes in the stubble. Meadow larks sang from the fence posts.

One spring we were treated to a total eclipse of the sun. We brought to school pieces of glass blackened by holding them over the flame of a coal-oil lamp. Others who had a camera in the family brought negatives. It was an eerie feeling when the sun was reduced to a slim ring of light. There was a strange kind of twilight and silence as the birds stopped singing.

The road west of our school ran through a ravine for a quarter of a mile. This made our walk to school more interesting. Saskatoon and chokecherry bushes bloomed in the spring and produced berries later. There were banks of wild roses. Nesting wrens and warblers filled the air with song. One year after a heavy rain had eroded a clay bank near the road we found the skull of a bison, which we took home. Hornets made a large nest one year on a branch of an elm tree which hung over the centre of the road near the bottom of the ravine. Some of the older boys decided to burn them out. They tied a rag to the end of a pole, soaked it with coal oil, lit it with a match and pushed it up under the nest. The hornets made an amazingly loud noise and descended on the boys, stinging some of them. One boy's eye was closed completely by the swelling.

On the way home from school I would check the birds' nests. On one occasion I took a mother Eastern bluebird out of her nest in an abandoned flicker's cavity in a telephone pole. She sat in my open hand for a while, then left me with a messy memento and flew away. There were a variety of nests. They included grackles, tree swallows, meadow larks, horned larks, chipping sparrows, wrens, longspurs, kildeer plovers, mallard and pintail ducks, and short eared owls. Over the years we collected one egg of each species from the eggs in the nests that we had discovered. They ranged from the tiny blue egg of the chipping sparrow to the large white egg of the mallard duck.

In the winter the ravine provided some good spots for sliding on sleds and toboggans. There was one spot where a pond formed in the spring at the entrance to a culvert under a road. When it would freeze over we played hockey on it. The puck was "regulation", but the sticks were made by cutting tree branches near an angled crotch and shaping them with an axe. They were heavy weapons but no one suffered anything worse than bruises.

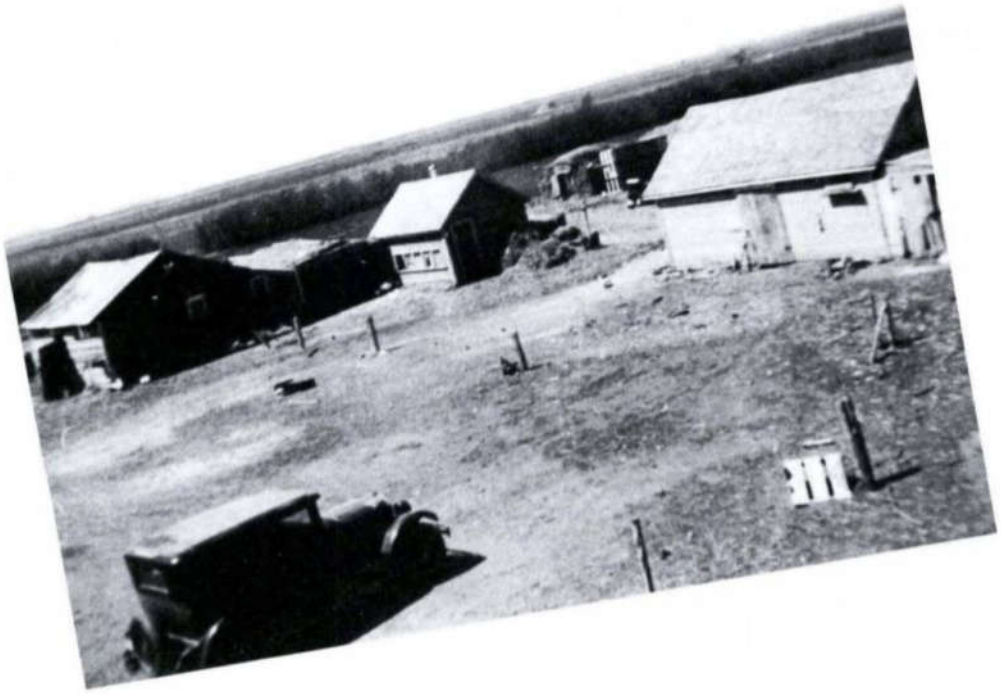
In the late twenties the Dominion Department of Agriculture started promoting a tree planting program for farm shelter belts on the prairie. Rail passenger cars were equipped to travel to various centres to foster interest in the program and to provide information. The following spring we received the requested shipment of seedlings and cuttings from Indian Head, Saskatchewan, free of charge. We all helped to plant a large shelter belt, a hedge and shade trees around the house, and willows near the edge of the slough. We planted Manitoba maple and Caragana seedlings upright in trenches made with the old walking plough, and the poplars and willow cuttings in holes made at a 45 degree angle with a dibble stick. We then filled in the trenches and tramped with a boot heel around the seedlings and above the base of the cuttings.

Farm life wasn't all work and no play. We had dogs and cats for pets, and even a meadow mouse for a short while. We once had baby red foxes. When picking wild strawberries, my brother John and I found a fox den in an abandoned badger hole in a small hill. The baby foxes were peeking out with their bright eyes. We returned to the den with shovels and started digging. The bottom of the den was down about five feet but we were able to dig them out and bring them home. There were at least six of them and they were small and cuddly. The project was not a success. The mother fox came around every night and the little ones howled and yapped. After about a week we let them go.

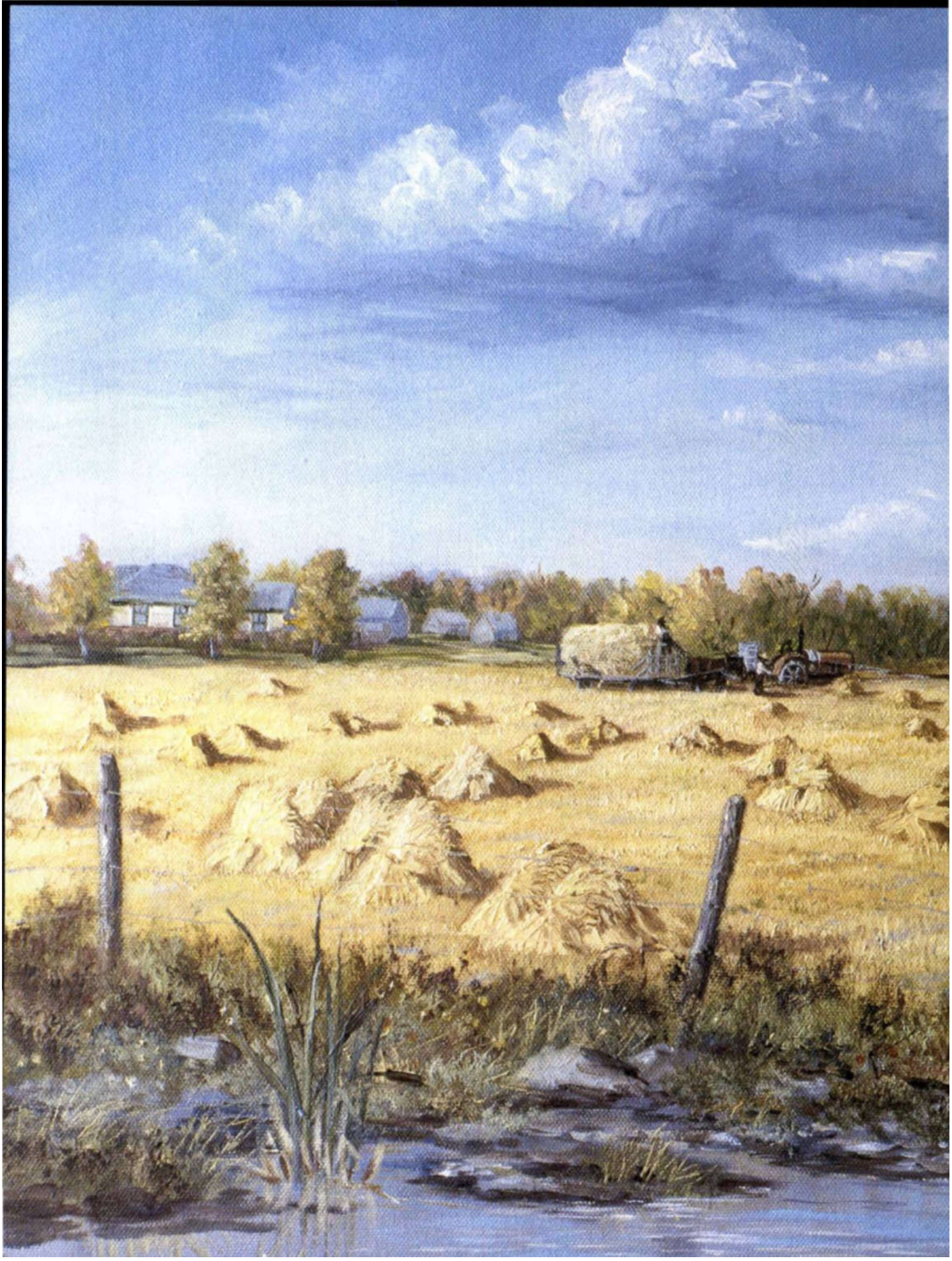
In the dry years the pasture would become overgrazed. In the summer holidays we might be asked to take the cattle to graze on the road allowance and stay with them to keep them out of trouble, bringing them home when they were full. It was easy work which gave us time to observe small things such as fuzzy caterpillars. Touch one and it turned into a ball for a little while. We decided to collect a number of them, set them in a line on the road and have a race. The one which unwound first and headed in the right direction was an easy winner.

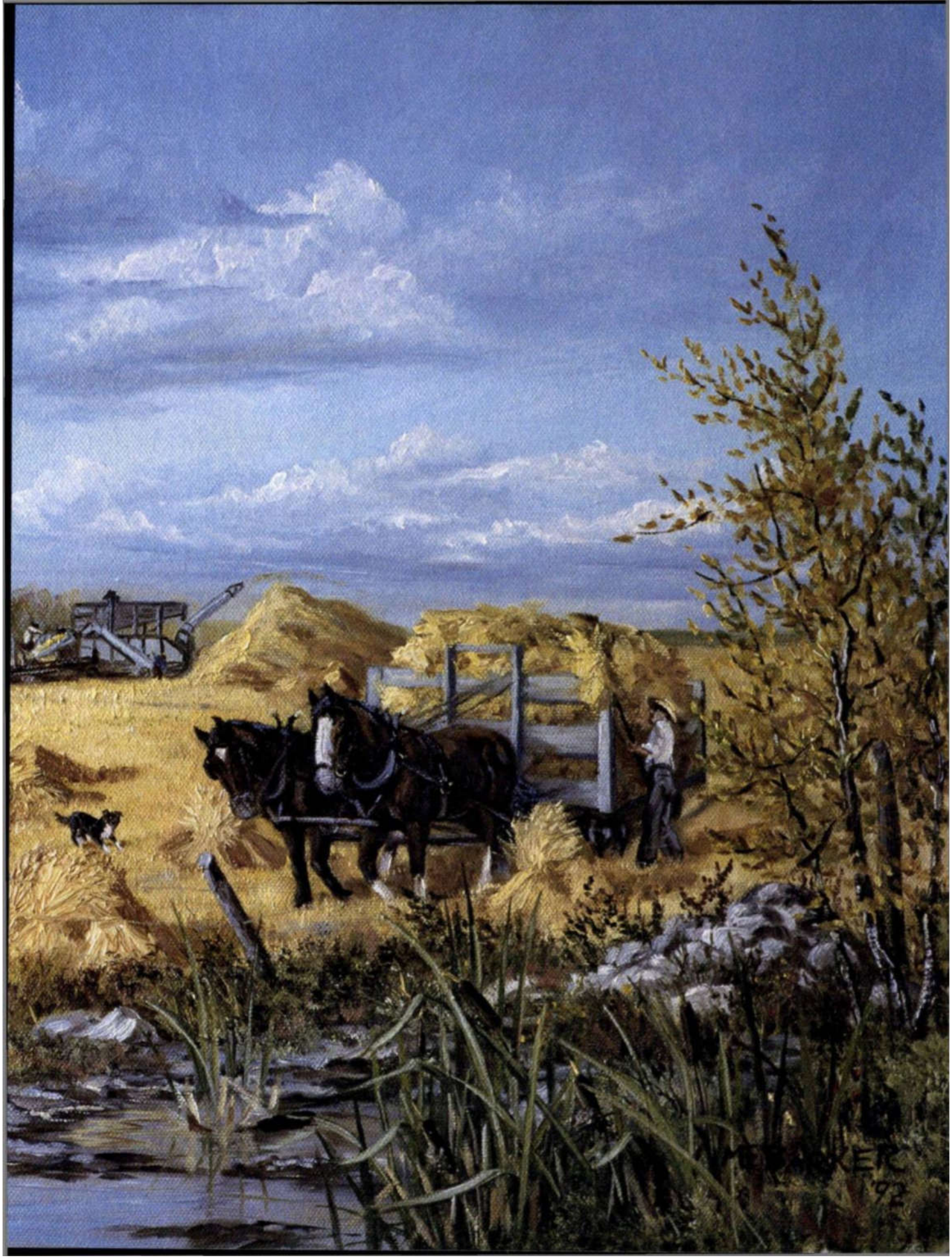
Once in a while some horses would escape through a

Text by Donald Lamont
Paintings by Marion E. Barker



COLOURS OF THE FARM

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gate left open, and we would set out to look for them. If it was after dark but there was still a glow in the western sky, by getting down and looking from ground level toward the glow it was sometimes possible to pick out their silhouettes. Also, by holding an ear against the ground, the vibrations caused by moving horses might be heard.

The Souris River was one of our favourite haunts. We had picnics near the river, went swimming in it, and duck shooting and fishing along it. At Fleming's Crossing the river made an S bend, and at one point was quite deep and wide. It was called "the bay" and was a good spot for fishing and swimming. For fishing we used binder whips (long bamboo poles) or long slim saplings. We used a strong cord for a line and either a spinning spoon lure or a large hook with a frog for bait. We caught jackfish and the occasional pickerel. There were freshwater clams and crawfish in abundance but Mother was afraid they might not be fit for food, they could give us what she called "ptomaine poisoning". The area immediately north of the river was untamed cattle range and coyote country. On one occasion when we were walking in that area I found the barrel and part of the rusted lock of a gun lying in the grass, partly buried in the ground. It was a hexagon barrel and in my ignorance I thought that meant it wasn't old. We used it for a crowbar for years and I recall bending it a little on a heavy job. I later found out that it was part of an old Hudson's Bay Company trading gun. We also sometimes found pemmican-pounding stones in the area.

We had pigs, turkeys, chickens, ducks and a few geese. The original chickens were of mixed breeds, Barred Rocks, Rhode Island Reds, White Wyandottes, Buff Orpingtons and Leghorns. One old White Wyandotte rooster was cantankerous and we were all afraid of him because he flew at us. There was also a huge bronze gobbler who would sit on baby turkeys to keep them warm. He threatened to attack anyone who crossed the yard. The hired man gave him a few slashes with a rope. After that, if we carried a rope he would stay away. One of the domestic drakes was a bit disoriented and would mate with the hens. For many years all the baby chicks, turkeys and ducklings were incubated by a mother sitting on eggs, not necessarily her own, or even of her own species. Some farmers had mechanical incubators.

Vegetable gardening was an essential part of our spring and summer activities. The potato patch covered a large area and was planted by throwing out seed potatoes in a trench made by the old walking plough and then covering them. Potato beetles which arrived shortly after the first leaves appeared were poisoned with Paris Green. Also, some beetles were picked off and any egg clusters were destroyed. We usually had enough potatoes to see us through the winter. We also grew quantities of vegetables of all kinds. Root vegetables and pumpkin and onions stored well in our cellar. Each year in late winter we started to drool over the

seed catalogues because by that time we were ready for radishes, green onions and lettuce. There were plenty of weeds of all kinds, but the worst was an annual grass which we called "knot grass". It was often necessary to weed by hand around the plants as well as hoe between the rows. We also grew black currants and strawberries. Flowers were not a priority but we grew some. There was an advertisement in the *Free Press Prairie Farmer* by a woman in Manyberries, Alberta, offering flower seeds for the cost of packing and mailing. Her motto was "Let the prairie bloom like the rose". We wrote to her and received the seeds. Two of the flowers I remember were cosmos and hollyhocks.

Picking wild berries in wooded areas near the Souris River was a very important activity for the summer holidays. Dad would take everyone in the car in the evening to pick saskatoons or high bush cranberries. One evening just after dusk we were still among the bushes when we were startled by a loud "voom" sound overhead. It turned out to be a nighthawk putting on the brakes after diving on an insect. Most of the time we left on foot in the morning with a lunch and a ten-pound syrup pail full of water. We carried other syrup pails which we tied at the waist to leave our hands free for picking. We picked saskatoons, pincherries and in August, high bush cranberries. Some years wild strawberries were fairly abundant among the natural prairie grass. It took a long time to pick any quantity, but Mother made a great strawberry shortcake and they were delicious with thick rich cream. If we got enough she might add some to rhubarb preserves. Pincherries and cranberries made good jelly. Saskatoons were used for pies, preserves for winter, or eaten out of hand or with cream and sugar.

The process of butter making took time, patience and a fair amount of work. Cream was stored in a cool place until enough was collected to make butter. It would be sour enough to churn. Our first churn was crockery with a clean cloth cover with a hole for the handle of the wooden dasher. The cloth contained the splashes as the dasher was plunged up and down to cause the butter fat to separate, or as Mother said, "break". The dashing was continued after the "break" until the particles were gathered into larger lumps. The buttermilk was then drained off through a sieve and the lumps of butter were rinsed several times with cold water to remove more buttermilk. After that it was put in a large bowl and worked with a special wooden butter ladle to squeeze out any remaining water or buttermilk. It was then salted. If it was winter when the cows weren't eating green grass, butter colouring might be added, especially if some of the butter was for sale. It was then worked more to distribute the salt and the colouring. If it was for home consumption it was packed in a crock. If it was for sale it was made into one-pound blocks by forcing it into a special wooden butter mould, which had a moveable top used to force the butter out of the mould onto a sheet of butter paper, already printed "Fresh Manitoba Dairy Butter". The paper was then folded and the butter was ready for sale.

Storage of food was very important. Ham and bacon were cured with smoked salt and saltpetre. Eggs were stored in periods when the hens were laying a surplus, by keeping them in a crock in the cellar in a solution of waterglass, which sealed the shells. The eggs were later used for baking. The "beef ring" was an informal organization which enabled farmers to have a supply of meat, particularly from spring to fall when meat could not be stored. Each week a steer was slaughtered and the beef divided into equal portions for each member. A standard size of steer was established and each member put in one steer each year.

Lamont Family Collection

The author, right, with his brothers Art and John and the family dog Buck, takes time out from farm chores, circa 1938.

Some farmers took a wagon load of wheat to the mill near the town of Wawanesa every fall and returned with sacks of flour, bran and shorts. The wheat was weighed at the mill and dockage for weed seeds estimated. Each received an amount of flour, bran and shorts based upon the amount his grain would produce when ground, less a share for the mill. He did not get his own wheat back in ground form and pay a fee. This procedure enabled the farmer to load and start for home right away. It was good flour and cost less than at the store.

The least fruitful exercise each summer was the performance of statute labour. In our case it consisted of providing a four-horse team and driver for several days

to work on building graded roads. This required ploughing up heavy sod and using a fresnal scraper to move it to wherever the politically well-connected road boss wanted it. Dad had barely enough horse power to work his farm, and he resented overworking them for long hours in the summer heat to improve a road for a municipal councillor miles away, especially when there were mud holes near home that were impassable after a heavy rain. It is of interest that a covenant to perform statute labour may still be in the fine print in farm mortgages.

Being quite isolated from large centres, people were dependent on each other for social activities, and succeeded in creating all kinds of opportunities like school or barn dances, box socials, card parties, fowl suppers, oyster suppers, sports days, Sunday school and school district picnics; concerts and plays.

The Old Timers' gathering held every year at Tucker's Grove near our local town of Margaret combined a reunion, a sports day, and a picnic. There was a large poplar (aspen) grove in the centre of the area. The refreshment booth and picnic tables were set up among the trees. The refreshment booth was covered with fresh cut poplar boughs for shade. They gave off a strong but pleasant aroma as they dried. My favourite purchases from the booth were ice cream and Blackwood's cream soda. The old timers had a horseshoe-pitching contest and a ball game. There were races for the children and other sports events. One year the "Pinkham Tigers" girls' softball team played against another local team. They wore navy and white middies, navy bloomers and dark stockings. The big event was the hardball game in the evening before a crowd expanded by those who had not taken the day off. It was a good class of baseball and the crowd cheered for both sides. The people in the cars lined up behind the spectators sitting on the grass near the base lines, honked their klaxon horns in approval of every good play.

Although it was unorganized, Saturday night in Margaret was a special social occasion. The farm families gathered to buy their groceries, get their hair cut at the barber shop (men only), drop off their dull plough shares at the blacksmith shop, get a quart of oil put in the car at the garage, buy their hardware or lumber needs at the hardware store, and pick up the mail at the post office. There was usually a poker game in the office at the hardware store, but the big gathering of families with children was at the general store. Entering the store was intimidating for us because we were not regular Saturday night shoppers, and the aisle was lined with people who were also a little shy. We had to say hello to each acquaintance as we paraded to the back of the store where the counter was located. The area by the pot-bellied stove in the centre was occupied by men swapping stories. There were usually school friends in the store and we joined them to have a conversation. Sometimes Dad would treat us in the small ice-cream parlour. The storekeepers were so busy that it took a long time to get orders filled, but no one was in a hurry. The pool table in the barber shop attracted the young men. We might

spend some time there to watch the games. The air was blue with cigarette smoke and profanity.

The harvest period was an exciting time of the year, because at last we would be rewarded for all prior effort. Like all farm boys, we started working in the fields at an early age. We operated a binder, stooked the sheaves with a pitch-fork, manned a stook wagon and hauled grain to the granary or elevator with a team and wagon. The days were long. When stooking we took water to the field in a ten-pound syrup pail. It was salty water and Dad thought that it tasted better with a handful or two of rolled oats added. By the time we got to the bottom of the pail the water would be hot, but the oats provided some energy.

Some days were particularly hard. The worst that I remember was hauling a heavy barley crop from the threshing machine to the granary on a very hot day and then unloading it with a scoop. Getting into the granary in the dust and intense heat to shovel it back from the opening was exhausting. I was nauseated at the end of the day and barely able to eat.

We never worked in the fields on Sundays although it was frustrating at times to watch a dry sunny Sunday pass when it was likely to rain on Monday.

Dad had an arrangement with a farmer who owned a threshing outfit. He had no children and we provided most of the labour for threshing both our crop and his. Dad paid some cash as well. This arrangement lasted into the early years of the Second World War. The trend toward less labour-intensive and less interesting farming methods which was underway in the mid-thirties was accelerated by the war when labour became scarce. There was something about the old-fashioned way that was fun. Horses have mannerisms and temperaments. There was a great social life with the threshing gang. The hired farm help came from many different backgrounds, and had interesting stories to tell. Some could sing and play the fiddle and harmonica. We had a new barn built after the 1939 harvest and I recall threshing oats directly into the barn in 1940. In our operation, the grain had been hauled by truck after 1937, but horses were still used in 1940 to bring the sheaves to the threshing machine.

The photograph upon which this painting is based shows the author's brother Philip Lamont, right, and his friend Johnny O'Halleran heading for a day's fishing on the Souris River, circa 1939.

I feel sad when I go back to the area, and realize that many, if not all, of the most interesting features of the prairie as it was when I was a child have been drained, ploughed, bulldozed, fertilized or sprayed into oblivion. The sunsets and memories remain. ◆

Raised on a farm in south-western Manitoba, Donald Lamont served in the RCAF during the Second World War. He became a lawyer after the war and was in charge of the Land Titles system in Manitoba and later in Alberta. Now retired, he lives at Canmore, Alberta.

Marion E. Barker has been painting for 45 years. She was raised in Waterloo, Ontario, and has lived in Alberta since 1961. Her work is in galleries in Calgary and Edmonton and in a number of private and corporate collections.

The Patriotic Fund, 1914-1918

Fuel for the Home Fires

City of Toronto Archives

By Desmond Morton and Cheryl Smith

Ah! The battlefield is wider
than the Cannon's sullen roar,
And the women weep o'er battles lost or won.
For the man a cross of honour;
but the crepe upon the door
For the girl behind the man behind the gun.

— Wilson Macdonald

"Many the times and often that I wish I was with you" wrote Sergeant Frank Maheux in December 1916. "I'll say to myself Angeline is sleeping now. I don't know what I give to be beside you. Instead I'll have my rifle beside me. So you see for a poor beggar no[t] used to think to much that will drive a fellow crasy I am prett[y] near but not quite yet. ..."

For almost 100,000 Canadian families in the First World War, letters were almost the only means of contact between men overseas and the women and children they had left behind. Much has been written about soldiers and very little about their families. Our knowledge is also one-sided: many families kept the carefully-censored cards and letters from men at the front, but soldiers, forced to carry all their possessions on their backs, seldom had space for more than a few letters, creased with much reading and soaked by rain and sweat.

A Problem of Family Support

Out of eight million Canadians in 1914, almost 700,000 men and women joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force, of whom almost 488,000 were single, about 120,600 were married and almost 6,000 were widowers. Of the 424,589 soldiers who went overseas, 88,347, or about one in five, left wives. Many of the single men had been the sole support of their parents or other family members. In the wake of the war, close to 20,000 widows, mothers and other soldiers' "dependents" received pensions. The war affected a great many people who never wore uniform. Their descendants, who see references to being "on the Patriotic", should know what it meant.

The Minister of Militia in 1914, Colonel Sam Hughes, was almost as keen on women's rights as he was on the Empire. Married men with children were discouraged from enlisting. A husband needed his wife's permission. Of the 136 officers and 4,945 other ranks released at the Valcartier Camp in Quebec, seven officers and 372 other soldiers went home after protests from wives or parents. In peacetime, life for a soldier's family was hard. "Officers' wives eat puddings and pies", ran the old army song, "Soldiers' wives eat skilly". Suddenly, in the patriotic mood of 1914, the wives and children of the Empire's defenders could not be allowed to suffer. Yet the tremendous costs of a war for a country deep in economic depression in 1914 called for frugality and restraint.

In previous wars, Patriotic Funds had been raised to finance pensions, care of the sick and wounded, even medals. The remaining Boer War fund provided a $76,000 bank balance for a new Canadian Patriotic Fund (CPF), launched on 18 August 1914. A galaxy of Ottawa's distinguished names, from the Duke of Connaught to young William Lyon Mackenzie King, were involved. Under a charter, approved by Parliament on 29 August, the CPF would limit itself to collecting funds "... for the assistance, in case of need, of the wives, children and dependent relatives of officers and men, residents of Canada, who, during the present war, may be on active service with the naval and military forces of the British Empire and Great Britain's allies." Someone else could provide pensions, medical care and medals. The Hon. Secretary and guiding spirit would be Herbert Ames, a Montreal Member of Parliament. American-born and educated, Ames was as good an example of a progressive reformer as Canada could boast. His study of Montreal's working-class slums, published in 1897 as *The City below the Hill,* gave him a national reputation and a confident grasp of what needed to be done to raise the working poor to middle-class standards of hygiene, education and welfare. With Ames in charge, the CPF would do more than collect money and hand it out again. Certainly it would organize most of Canada, except for Manitoba and a few cities which went their own way, and rural Quebec, which wasn't going anywhere.

Separation Allowance

Creation of the Patriotic Fund lightened Ottawa's financial responsibility to soldiers' families; it did not wholly remove it. A flood of letters from desperate women was evidence that many soldiers had done little or nothing for their families. "I think that you will agree that I am better off without him", wrote Mrs. Gerald Wharton from Buffalo about a husband who had left her with debts and a rent bill at the outset of war, "but I do not think that he should go free and me be tied down to work to keep myself and his child as well as mine." Private John Clovis Martin of the 42nd Battalion had enlisted as a widower, and had assigned his pay to another woman. The real Mrs. Martin wanted it back. Howard Ferry's mother wanted his support, but it took weeks to find that Ferry was in the 36th Battalion. His mother didn't know. Wesley Peters left his child with a woman when he joined the First Contingent. "This man is an Indian", explained a CPF investigator, "and, evidently, he did not know enough to apply for any allowance for his mother." Harry Mortimer had quarrelled with his wife a few weeks before he joined up. Or so she claimed, after seeing his photograph in an article. But Mrs. Mortimer claimed that her Harry was 35 and had married her in 1907, while a Manitoba Patriotic Fund investigator found that the Mortimer in the picture was only 23. That was no comfort to a desperate woman with three children to support: "So what do you people expect [?] four people to starve since my husband had enlisted and if I don't get anything out of this I will publish in the Papers showing where the

Public money is going to."

As a counterpart to the peacetime marriage allowance, granted to a small number of Permanent Force officers and soldiers who married "on the strength" with their commanding officer's permission, the Militia Department announced on 4 September 1914 that CEF members could apply for Separation Allowance (SA) for their dependents, ranging from $20 a month for privates and $23 for a sergeant to $30 for a lieutenant or $60 a month for a lieutenant colonel. Soldiers could also assign up to half their pay to a dependent. As for the Patriotic Fund, its National Executive agreed on a maximum monthly scale of $30 for a woman, $7.50 for a child aged 10 to 15; $4.50 for a child of 5 to 10 years and $3 for a child under 5. To avoid discouraging pay assignments, the Fund agreed to ignore them in assessing a family's need "although it was recognized that under these conditions many women would be receiving considerably more than their menfolk had been able to give them while in civilian life and more perhaps than was necessary to meet their reasonable needs." The answer, for the CPF, was to press the government as early as November 1914 to make a 50 percent pay assignment a pre-requisite for granting Separation Allowance.

Separation Allowance was intended for wives or mothers. What if men were dependent? John Grant, paralyzed since 1902, had depended on his wife, a nurse who kept a boarding house in Sault Ste. Marie. Mrs. Grant died on 22 May 1915 — leaving her husband penniless and destitute. Two sons at the front had never made an assignment because their mother had always coped. Could he be helped? By August the Treasury Board had reached a decision: "instead of dealing with the individual case it would be preferable to have submitted for consideration a general recommendation dealing with cases of this character." "As both Mr. & Mrs. Grant have died of want since this case was submitted to the Treasury Board", noted J.W. Borden, the Department's chief accountant, "there is no need for [a new regulation] now." One was passed, however, and James Stevens could write gratefully in January, 1916, that a CPF investigator had indeed confirmed that he was paralyzed and that his cheque for six months of Separation Allowance had arrived.

Managing Separation Allowance posed a major administrative problem. In 1916, the year the largest number of Canadian soldiers went overseas, the number of accounts grew from 85,100 on 1 January to 231,518 by year's end, from 189 separate ledgers to 2,055. In a month when twenty battalions left for England, 32,267 new accounts were added. Space expanded from 1,000 to 13,500 square feet. Recruiting clerks at $2.48 a day was a problem; munitions factories paid far more. Cheques were lost, forged, stolen and complained about when they did not arrive on the same day each month. The Separation Allowance branch begged for staff to investigate claims of fraudulent marriages, deserted wives and widowed mothers who had no need of a son's support. Until the summer of 1917, assigned pay and separation allowance were sent as separate cheques. Gradually efficiency arrived, with time clocks to prevent absenteeism, cheque-writing machines, mechanized mailing and, as of February, 1917, a Separation Allowance Review Board backed by investigations by "visitors" from local Patriotic Fund branches. The Review Board "produced great savings".

How the Families Fared

If they received assigned pay, separation allowance and a CPF grant many families were better off than before the war. The *Labour Gazette,* official guide to all matters statistical in Canada, suggested that an urban

family in 1913 needed $60 a month for food, rent, fuel and light or $40 without a man. With SA and the CPF, a woman with three children in Toronto or Montreal could count on $45 a month, not counting assigned pay. "... you will get $25 month from the Canadian patriotic fund and $20 from the Government", Frank Maheux assured his "poor wife" in November, 1914. He would have earned $22 a month for his family by working in a lumber camp. If Maheux forgot to mention the assigned pay, he was not unique among husbands in avoiding the issue. For a logger and South African War veteran, the manly pleasures of drink and revelry took priority over the manly responsibility of a family. Not until June, after Maheux had been sternly lectured by a nurse during a stay in hospital and his battalion had left Canada, was Angeline's support properly established. Local committees could pay less, of course, and were invited to pay up to 20 percent less. "To give the woman in the small village an income that would maintain a woman in the city was unwise", one observer recalled, "while to bring the city woman's income down to the level that was adequate in the country was unjust."

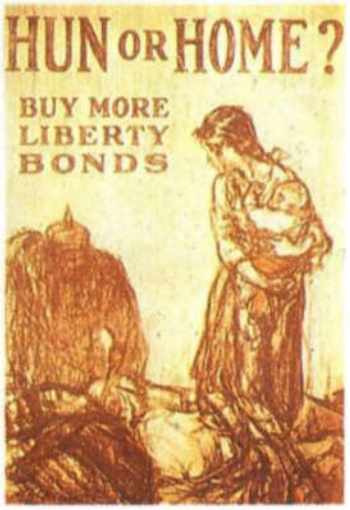
Who Was a Wife?

Defining "wife" troubled every agency involved in family support, from the CPF and the Military Hospitals Commission to the highly autonomous new Board of Pension Commissioners, created in 1916. A year's experience taught officials that family structures were not quite as simple as officialdom had imagined. By November 1915, Militia Department officials must have thought they had it right:

> For the purpose of the provision of Separation Allowance "wife" means the woman who was married to the officer or the soldier in question under the laws of the country in which the marriage was solemnised and who has not been separated from her husband by a judicial decree or "separation from bed or board" or other similar decree parting her from her husband's home and children, but where a wife so separated is entitled either by the agreement or separation to regular payments from her husband, or by an order of a competent court to alimony, such wife shall be entitled to the extent of such payments or alimony, to the separation allowance.

Eventually, the government acknowledged that there were cases where, even without a court order, a separated wife would be entitled to payment and might even have the benefit of the doubt "if it does not appear that the husband is absolved from the obligation of maintenance". However, the CPF executive, in such cases, insisted that it was a trustee for the soldier's wishes. Early in 1917 its national executive ruled that it had no obligation to let deserted wives know that the Militia Department recognized alimony claims. If a man had deserted his wife, she had no claim on the Fund though the soldier-son of a deserted mother could make a claim for her as a mother.

Women whose marriage had never been solemnized might scandalize middle-class values but they were wives and mothers as much as those who could present their "lines". In the eyes of tattling neighbours, Sergeant Sharpe may have lied when he described Alma Freed as Mrs. W.H. Sharpe on his enlistment documents, but she had borne his son. Yet when Sharpe formally married her in 1916, she fell under the ban on CPF support for wives married after a soldier had enlisted. In some cases, marrying an "unmarried wife" would have led to the serious criminal charge of



bigamy. As an order-in-council in October 1916 confessed, "quite a large number of cases of soldiers having two wives have come to light". Usually, the first wife had been deserted in England for a second wife in Canada who, when bigamy was discovered, would be left without support while Canadian funds were redirected to the legal wife in England. Fortunately, the British themselves supplied the loophole: their army had ruled that separation allowance went to the wife and family supported at enlistment, particularly if there were two prior years of support but not to the wife and relatives unsupported at the time of enlistment. Who could improve on British justice? Separation Allowance, explained a Parliamentary Reply on 2 February 1917, went to "Legal Wives", widows whose sons were their sole support, persons designated to care for soldiers' children where a wife was judicially separated, motherless children and "Women who have been supported by the soldier 'on a bona fide domestic basis' for two years prior to enlistment, but who have not been married to the soldier, and the children of such a

union." Clergy and other civic moralists might protest but the state had not tested would-be soldiers on their marital integrity.

On other issues, both the Fund and the Militia Department reflected their own interests. Women married after a soldier's enlistment were given no claim on the Fund during the war years. Until 1916, unlike the CPF, the Militia Department granted Separation Allowance to soldiers who married. After April 1916 soldiers had to get their commanding officer's approval and prove a pre-enlistment engagement if they wanted the extra $20. "There is no doubt at all but that we are being 'soaked' with many men that are getting married", complained Major-General John Wallace Carson, a Montreal mining magnate and senior Canadian in England.

Troops in garrison at Halifax, Quebec, Esquimalt or along the Welland Canal did not qualify for benefits reserved for CEF members such as Separation Allowance and CPF payments. Donors were emphatic: there had to be danger. "Several large subscribers", Morris reported, "objected in most emphatic terms to the money being used for the benefit of any other dependents than these", and on 13 October 1914, the executive ruled that support for home-service families would end on 1 December. In June 1916 when Sir Sam Hughes pointed to the discrepancy between the $20 separation allowance for men overseas and the $6.50 a month for families of home-service troops, his cabinet colleagues were unmoved. Families, reported a Nova Scotia M.P., were forced to seek poor relief.

Dealing with Bureaucracy

Dealing with a remote and unresponsive bureaucracy in Ottawa was an uncommon experience for most Canadians. When a mother in Winnipeg lost her Separation Allowance after one of her two sons was killed, an official letter directed her to ask the other son for help. He happened to be a prisoner in Germany. In 1916, after the Militia Department cut eliminated working pay, the pay reductions were reflected in sharply reduced assignments. According to T.S. Ewart, a Winnipeg lawyer and perennial critic of the government, the Department informed families that the cuts were "at the request of the soldier". Pay assignments disappeared altogether when a soldier went absent or deserted and when he was sentenced to prison or detention by a court martial. Understandably, families were seldom aware of the circumstances. Applicants themselves had trouble recognizing the needs of a large bureaucracy. A Manitoba widow seeking the Allowance, a parliamentary committee was told in 1917, had sent in the wrong battalion number. When the authorities finally tracked down her son, she had disappeared and a local clergyman had to be persuaded to locate her. It turned out that she had written to the Militia Department without giving her son's name, number or battalion and the letter had been put aside.

The rule that soldiers could direct Separation Allowance to only one dependent created problems. What if a soldier married and wanted his Allowance switched from his mother to his new wife? Jeanie Hall complained to her M.P. that one of her soldier sons had been "estranged ... through the influence of a woman." She was not alone. Hector Payette had promised his mother $45 a month when he joined the 22nd Battalion, but she got nothing but a temporary grant from the CPF until the Deputy Minister, Major-General Eugene Fiset, gently suggested that she get her parish priest to attest that she was now a widow.

Handing out "The Patriotic"

Nor was administration of the Patriotic Fund ultimately much simpler. The CPF's twin responsibilities were to raise funds and to spend them on families in need. Determining need required an investigation which, "done tactfully and kindly", insisted the Montreal Branch's Relief Committee, "does not offend the woman with common sense." Initially CPF visitors were overworked male committee members. As the colder spirit of charity replaced patriotic fervour, the demand for investigation grew. Errors would have been avoided, claimed the CPF's national bulletin, if men "had enlisted the services of their wives and daughters and persuaded the latter to form a ladies' auxiliary to keep in touch with the Fund's beneficiaries ... Without an auxiliary, it is practically impossible to exercise the supervision that is so desirable."

Increasingly, donors to the CPF insisted that recipients be "deserving". Donations must not be squandered on extravagant living. Were soldiers' families living better than they had when the official breadwinner was at home? Were wives in need because of an extravagant taste in hats or a susceptibility to salesmen offering furniture on the instalment plan? Surely the wives of branch officials would be prudent and frugal guardians of their husband's generosity to soldiers' families. Another useful ally was the clergy. A circular from the Hamilton branch to local ministers urged them to alert the Fund to people who were being paid too much. "You gentlemen more than any others have an opportunity of judging the home conditions of these women and children in our care. We want your co-operation ... It would be wrong to give a family more than they may reasonably expect the husband or son to provide when he returned." In Brantford, merchants who contributed to the CPF had the comfort of knowing that the local branch respected their rights as creditors. Beneficiaries signed a form permitting deductions to pay off their debts. Those who persisted in extravagance and debt

were simply cut off. "We take the stand that it is not fair to subscribers", reported an official, "to pay money to persons who are not making proper use of it."

Ames' belief that poverty could be overcome by habits of thrift and self-restraint was echoed in branches across Canada. Saskatchewan led the way with a compulsory savings plan that simply banked half a family's CPF cheque during the cheaper summer months, and released the compulsory savings only in the case of urgent and agreed need. The policy, admitted the local organizers, was controversial but it worked, and was imitated, with greater or lesser rigour, by other branches across the country. "Let us again remind you of the advisability of STARTING A SAVINGS BANK ACCOUNT" urged a circular distributed to CPF beneficiaries in Galt (Cambridge). It would be a help in trouble and sickness and when the soldier came home. Women who devoted their wartime income to paying off prewar debts, reducing the mortgage and restoring fortunes damaged by hard times and the missing husband, earned special praise in CPF bulletins and circulars.

The Ungrateful Poor

How did beneficiaries feel? The surviving evidence is sparse, anecdotal and negative. Interviewed half a century later, Frank Bell, a Montrealer too young to fight, remembered a soldier's wife in his boarding house. She and her two children lived on $20 from her husband and $20 from the CPF. "This was administered by a group of rich men's wives and if they found that a wife was running around, or that she was living beyond her means (they thought) or something, they would cut her off." One of the forbidden luxuries, Bell recalled, was a telephone, "because obviously no soldier's wife could afford a telephone." Until they came home, many soldiers had no idea that they had left their families at the mercy of a charity. "Don't be a bit backward about going after the Patriotic & get all you can", a Toronto soldier urged his wife when their new baby arrived. Another soldier had told him that a wife was entitled to $10 per month and $4.50 for each child "so do not be backward about asking for it." This was easy advice from a barrack hut in England, but for the wife it meant

begging from Fund officials or their wives. Like many self-respecting working-class people, she would rather starve — but neither would she trouble her husband with the truth.

Not all wives kept their troubles to themselves. Private Maurice Lewis, doing "his little bit" as a medical orderly in France, pleaded with the prime minister to help his family. His wife in Regina reported that she and her children were desperate. The cost of doctors and extras for his sick daughter had devoured his savings and the little girl was no better. "I am no beggar," Lewis pleaded, "and all I ask for is that my wife and children are looked after while I am away and my house and bit of land protected." Saskatchewan CPF officials explained that they had cut off Mrs. Lewis while they investigated whether she was receiving money from the Grand Trunk Railway, her husband's

peacetime employer. An Ottawa soldier's wife, Evelyn Morris, appealed to Borden on behalf of her three children, for reinstatement as a government charwoman. She had fallen afoul of a CPF visitor who reported "she does not know the value of money or how to spend or rather save it." It was "owing to inefficiency" that she had also lost her job as an office cleaner.

In the spring of 1917, as prices began to soar and Canadians belatedly realized that they had a recruiting crisis, wives and mothers in Vancouver met and asked for pay to be raised to $2.50 a day. Winnipeg's city council urged the federal government to raise pay and pensions "to enable recipients and dependents to maintain themselves in comfort under present enhanced prices without assistance from the Patriotic or other funds." Toronto councillors simply demanded double pay for privates and non-commissioned officers "and to raise the pay of commissioned officers on actual service to whatever amount deemed wise". The 1917 general election emboldened Mrs. R.E. Farquharson of Kamloops to approach the prime minister. While prices of food and clothing soared, she was still trying to keep herself and seven children on $75 a month: "surely it is not necessary that any little ones should suffer where a small cheque of perhaps $75 would meet extra expenses for winter and make us comfortable ..."

Bringing Families Home

Once the war was over, repatriation of families had to be organized on a larger scale. For compassionate reasons and because of the added cost of their separation allowance, married soldiers got priority in demobilization. Those with families in England soon formed a separate stream of returning soldiers. A convalescent depot at Buxton was designated as the staging camp for men with families and "family ships" were routed to Saint John, New Brunswick, the smaller of Canada's two main winter ports on the Atlantic. A CPR line through Maine connected with Montreal. Exhausted and often sick after a mid-winter crossing in the steerage of overcrowded ships, sometimes suffering from the deadly Spanish influenza, mothers and children needed help.

At Saint John, volunteers from 20 associations and facilities financed by the Dominion YWCA provided a dockside oasis. Military authorities had just opened a special hospital for victims of Spanish influenza when a ship arrived with 49 cases. Soon volunteers had the sad task of conducting burials, notifying relatives in England and caring for orphaned children. Passengers, sick and exhausted after a mid-winter Atlantic crossing, had many complaints. They got little sympathy from Colonel Obed Smith, Canada's immigration commissioner in England: "just so long as the ocean gets rough in bad weather and people suffer from *mal de mer* and many travel third class who never travelled that way before, these complaints will continue."

Between the Armistice on 11 November 1918 and the end of January 1919, when Ottawa finally granted free third-class passage to wives and children under 18, soldiers' families had to pay their passage. Some arrived almost penniless to discover that they still faced days of rail travel across Canada. "It was remarkable", a commentator recalled, a little disdainfully, "how many women thought they could travel to Western Canada with two or three children at an expenditure for means and incidentals of three or four dollars." With the summer, repatriation of families shifted to Quebec City where, once again, the YWCA financed the facilities, and volunteers from the Montreal Branch of the CPF helped the IODE staff a canteen. By the end of 1919 some 367,748 dependents as well as 267,813 members of the CEF had returned to Canada.

Two years after the bulk of demobilization was complete, many soldiers and their families were still enmeshed in misery. War's tragedies do not stop with the shooting. Pensions for widows and orphans were thin compensation for the loss of a real income. Far worse off were families whose husband, son or father returned shattered in mind or body. No pension or "helplessness allowance" could ever compensate for the pain and misery. Postwar amendments made Canadian pensions seem the most generous in the world. In 1919, pensions were levelled up to the rate for a lieutenant and in 1920, Parliament added a 50 percent cost of living bonus. A totally disabled soldier with a wife and three children received $1,644; his British counterpart could receive $879 and even an American received $1,200 a year regardless of family size. Only a small minority of veterans, seven percent in 1926, earned the full rate. The great majority lived on a small fraction of the full pension benefit. A complex network of appeal mechanisms built, scrapped and rebuilt during the 1920s testified to the frustration of veterans and their organizations with a Board of Pension Commissioners determined to save the Treasury from illegitimate raiding.

Widows, living on a fraction of the pension given a disabled soldier and his family, had to endure snooping to ensure that they had not abandoned a celibate state; other dependents — widowed mothers, helpless fathers and invalid sisters — were watched by suspicious or resentful neighbours for evidence that someone else could be supporting them. To avoid the American scandal of "pension widows", women who married a soldier after the sickness or injury that earned him a pension were denied any share of it until, by 1929, the parade of injustices had become too shameful. Pensions for a soldier's children could be extended past 16 for boys or 17

Fenelon Falls Museum

Women of Fenelon Falls, Ontario, celebrate the peace patriotically with the flags and costumes of allied nations.

for girls if they were "making satisfactory progress in a course of instruction approved by the Commission". Approval, the BPC chairman explained, was seldom given except for technical courses; academic education led to "inferior clerical positions".

War without End

The war altered the life of each family it touched. Some men came home to find unfaithful wives and neglected children. Women welcomed husbands, sons and brothers from an army that suffered a 15 per cent incidence of venereal disease. A soldier from Toronto left a wife in Toronto, married again in England and was killed. His English widow came to Canada and collected the man's pension: bigamy was not a crime if the second marriage was in another country and the rule Canadian authorities had adopted to keep their money at home had to be consistent.

In the summer of 1920, the Rev. Roy Frid of Brantford wrote on behalf of a young widow whose husband "for official purposes" was presumed to be dead. "Does the law regard her as being free to marry again if she wished to do so?" No, replied the Militia's Judge Advocate-General, if her husband turned out to be alive, "the subsequent marriage would be a bigamous one and a nullity, and the woman would leave herself liable for prosecution." A chaplain for the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment recalled a wife who had spent the war painfully paying off her husband's debts only to be deserted when he returned, and another whose wartime experiences had turned him into a "cocaine fiend". Private Plant of the PPCLI found that his wife had deserted him and put his children in the local poor house, but he could not afford a divorce. Toronto's *Saturday Night* echoed a controversial M.P. from Kingston, W.F. Nickle: "The numerous matrimonial complications which have arisen out of the war make it imperative that where ample grounds exist there should be an easy and cheap method of divorce." None was forthcoming.

As for the CPF, it endured for a few years after the war, using its branches to distribute meagre unemployment relief for unemployed veterans in the winters of 1919-20 and 1920-21. Its branch records appear to have disappeared. A great many were deposited with the Ontario Archives but when the Archivist's appeal for resources to handle them were ignored, they were destroyed. When Canada declared war in 1939, the Patriotic Fund was not revived. The enthusiasms of Herbert Ames seemed out-dated. ◆

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Dr. Louis Slotin And 'The Invisible Killer'

A young Canadian scientist gave his life
to save his friends when an experiment went wrong

By Martin Zeilig

It happened in an instant. A sudden blue glow momentarily enveloped the room before evaporating. In that moment, as the Geiger counter clicked wildly, scientist Louis Slotin knew that he had received a lethal dose of gama and neutron radiation from the core of the plutonium bomb he was testing. It was 3:20 P.M. on Tuesday, 21 May 1946, at the secret Omega Site Laboratory in Pajarito Canyon, Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Slotin had been instructing a colleague, Alvin C. Graves, who was to replace him at the Omega Site. Also present was S. Allan Kline, a 26-year-old graduate of the University of Chicago, who had been called over to observe the procedure. Five other colleagues were close by as Slotin, a Canadian physicist from Winnipeg who had been part of the team that created the atomic bomb, performed the action that would bring into close

proximity the two halves of a beryllium-coated sphere and convert the plutonium to a critical state.

With his left thumb wedged into a cavity in the top element, Slotin had moved the top half of the sphere closer to the stationary lower portion, a micro-inch at a time. In his right hand was a screwdriver, which was being used to keep the two spheres from touching. Then, in that fatal moment, the screwdriver slipped. The halves of the sphere touched and the plutonium went supercritical.

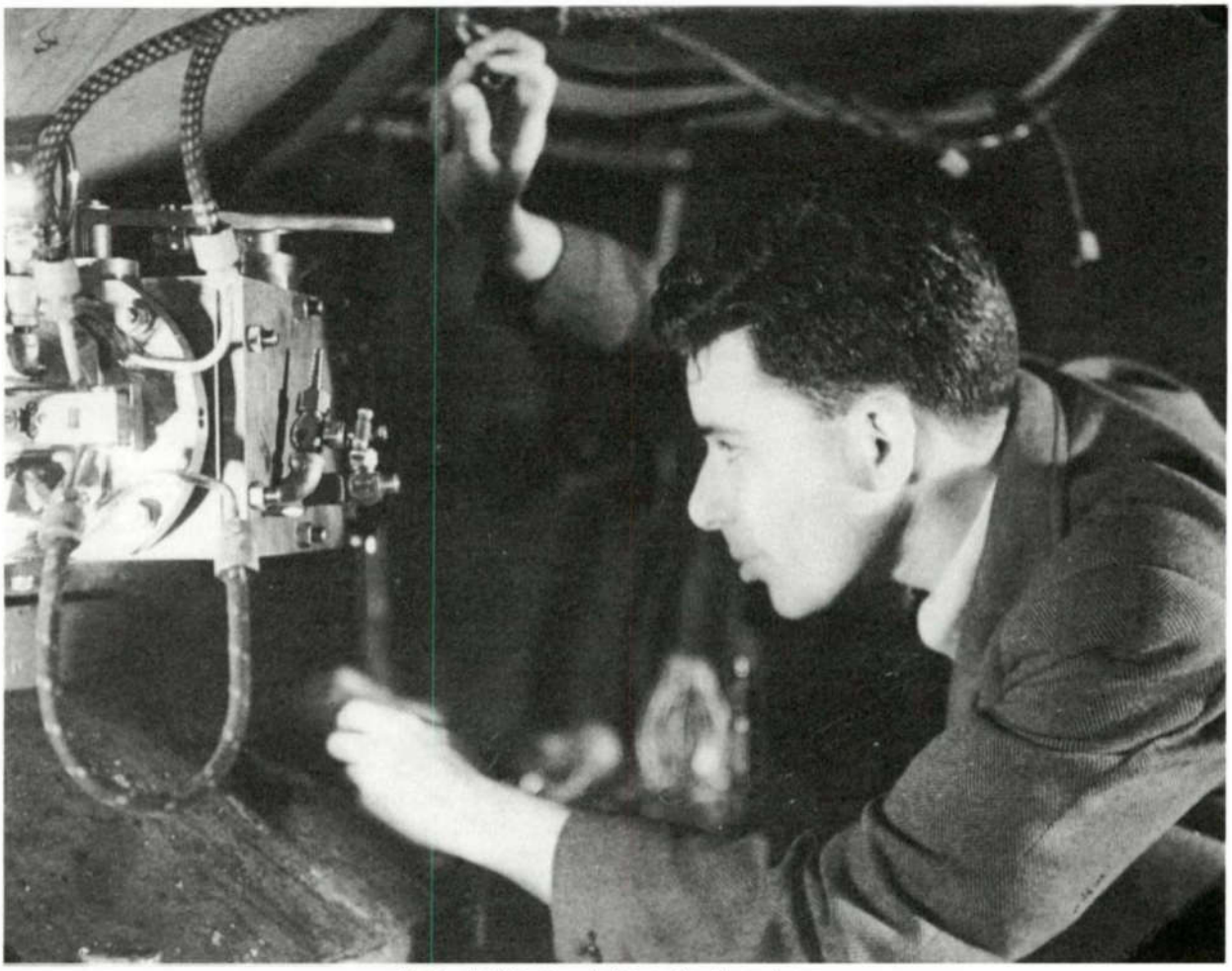
The chain reaction was stopped when Slotin knocked the spheres apart, but deadly gamma and neutron radiation had flashed into the room in a blue blaze caused by the instantaneous ionization of the lab's air particles. Louis Slotin had been exposed to almost 1,000 rads of radiation, far more than a lethal dose. Kline, who had been three or four feet away from Slotin, received between 90 and 100 rads, while Graves, standing a bit closer, received an estimated 166 rads.

A surge of heat "swept over the observers, felt even by those some distance from the source," writes Thomas D. Brock, a retired University of Wisconsin biologist who has done extensive research on early atomic-era accidents at Los Alamos. "In addition to the blue glow and heat, Louis Slotin experienced a sour taste in his mouth [and] an intense burning sensation in his left hand. As soon as Slotin left the building, he vomited, a common reaction from intense radiation." Another commentator suggests that it was as though Slotin had been fully exposed to an exploding atomic bomb at a distance of 4,800 feet.

There is some small variation in detail about what happened after Slotin knocked apart the two beryllium spheres, while using his body as a shield to protect the other men, but the official reports of the seven survivors, all of which the U.S. government "declassified" in 1985, paint a stark picture of immediate post mishap events.

According to security guard Patrick Cleary:

> After the accident I ran out the East door and down the ramp. Probably took me about five seconds or so. When I got to the gate, it was still locked and Mr. Kline, Cieslicki and myself were the only ones there. Mr. Kline told the M.P. to open the gate. He had some trouble getting his whistle out of his pocket, but, when he did, he opened the gates and then blew the whistle. I ran up the hill approximately 1,000 feet with the others.



Dr. Louis Slotin at work, date and location unknown.

Pretty soon Dr. Slotin and Mr. Young came out. Mr. Young called and told us to come down to the laboratory again. As soon as we got there we drew a diagram to figure out approximately where everyone was when it happened. The only other conversation was that everyone was wondering who had gotten most of the radiation.

The sketch was used by doctors to determine the amount of radiation to which each person had been exposed.

After arriving at the Los Alamos hospital Slotin told Alvin Graves: "I'm sorry I got you into this. I'm afraid I have less than a 50 per cent chance of living. I hope you have better than that."

One of Slotin's close friends at Los Alamos, physicist Philip Morrison, who "watched him die" and did much of the post-accident radiation calculations, wrote that "medical and nursing care were good — in fact a bit overwhelming". Nurse Annamae Dickey came every day, or sometimes twice a day, to take blood samples. Morrison reported that she "had a hard time concealing her distress when Louis pressed her for the results of her count."

Many volunteers were ready to donate blood for the transfusions doctors deemed necessary. Sadly, all efforts to save Slotin were futile. He died on 30 May after an agonizing sequence of radiation-induced traumas including severe diarrhea and diminished output of urine, swollen hands, erythema (redness) on his body, massive blisters on hands and forearms, paralysis of intestinal activity, gangrene and a total disintegration of bodily functions. It was a simple case of death from radiation, similar to what American scientists and medical personnel saw in Japan among A-bomb victims.

A few days before Slotin's death, Major-General Leslie R. Groves, the military and administrative head of the Manhattan Project, sent a U.S. Army DC-3 to Winnipeg to bring Slotin's parents to his bedside. Slotin had initially sent them a telegram and then, Morrison recalled, "with a nurse holding the receiver, he telephoned his family to tell them he had been in an acci-

dent, that he would be in hospital for a time. Since he couldn't visit them, perhaps, he suggested, his parents would come see him."

Israel and Sonia Slotin flew home from Santa Fe, New Mexico, with the casket — which had to include a mandatory metal interline sealer — containing their son's remains.

Since the Slotins were Orthodox Jews, the U.S. Army arranged for the aircraft to arrive in Winnipeg before sundown on Friday, the beginning of the Jewish sabbath. The plane was met at the airport by Louis Slotin's brother Samuel, members of the family, friends and the undertaker who transported the body to the Chesed Shel Emes (House of Truth) Chapel on Main Street. The *Winnipeg Tribune* ran a photograph of Slotin's casket being transferred from the plane into a hearse with the cutline "Hero's Body Home".

Two rather moving stories about Slotin's father are recounted in a 3 June 1946 letter from Philip Morrison, who is now Professor Emeritus of physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to fellow physicist Bernard Feld:

> When Mr. Slotin was being driven up here from Albuquerque after arriving by air, he explained why he had felt it necessary to come and why he was so much concerned. "Louis was my oldest son and every father loves his son. But there was more than that; there was respect for Louis, for a learned man".
>
> On the morning after Louis died, Hageman and I explained to Mr. Slotin about the need for an autopsy. He told us that it was against the traditions of the family and that he would be criticized for it when he returned to Winnipeg; but he gave permission for it now. He said that Louis had been a scientist all his life, and that when it could do him no harm, it would be wrong to prevent him adding to knowledge.

The funeral took place on Sunday 2 June 1946, a warm, breezy, partially overcast afternoon. Almost 3,000 people gathered on shady Scotia Street outside the Slotin family's home. They heard Rabbi S. Frank describe Louis as "one of the most brilliant scholars ever to come out of this city."

Rabbi Frank also quoted from a letter, written just before Slotin's death, by Major-General Groves which thanked the 35-year-old scientist for his "bravery and quick action which saved the lives of seven co-workers."

Louis Slotin's story has been told before in various forms, including a 1955 novel, *The Accident,* by Dexter Masters. His fatal mishap was portrayed in a graphic scene in the 1989 Hollywood movie *Fat Man and Little Boy,* with Paul Newman somewhat miscast as the gruff, heavy-set Major-General Groves.

The oldest of three children, Slotin was born on 1 December 1910. His Yiddish-speaking parents had escaped the pogroms of Czarist Russia. Louis grew up in the energetic, East-European melange of Winnipeg's North End.

As a boy, the bespectacled Louis Slotin demonstrated a love of knowledge. He also possessed a compelling desire to succeed. Louis was an exceptional student. He attended Machray Elementary School and St. John's Technical High School. Slotin was a wiry, wavy haired youth of 16 when he entered the University of Manitoba.

"Louis had an extreme intensity that enabled him to study long hours," his younger brother Sam Slotin recalled in a 1990 interview. "Louis used to make me play bridge with his friends, so that he could study instead. He liked to read inside our backyard gazebo."

Slotin won the Gold Medal in chemistry and physics. In 1933, he received his Master of Science degree from the university. One of his mentors helped him obtain a travelling fellowship. Thus, in October 1933 Slotin was able to continue with advanced scientific studies under Professor A.J. Allmand at King's College, London, England.

Slotin was awarded a London University doctorate in bio-chemistry in July 1936. He won a prize for his thesis, which bore the title "An Investigation into the Intermediate Formation of Unstable Molecules During some Chemical Reactions". Subsequently, Slotin spent six months as "special investigator" for the Great Southern Railway in Dublin, Ireland, testing the Drumm alkaline battery.

Much of the mystique surrounding Louis Slotin arose during his London period. In his moral and political history of the atomic scientists, *Brighter Than a Thousand Suns,* author Robert Jungt writes: "Ever since his earliest youth [Slotin] had gone in search of fighting, excitement, and adventure. He had volunteered for service in the Spanish Civil War, more for the sake of the thrill of it than on political grounds."

Sam Slotin later stressed during an interview with this writer that "Louis went on a walking tour in Spain. He did not take part in the war". Barbara Moon, in a 1961 *Maclean's* article, paints a picture of a young man with an impish sense of humour:

> [Slotin] regularly amused himself with the gullible by planting false clues to an imaginary and stylish past. Many of his friends came to believe, for example, that he had fought with the Loyalists in Spain and flown with the RAF and this seemed to please some strain of romance in him.

Undeniable were Slotin's accomplishments as an amateur fighter. He learned to box at Winnipeg's YMCA. Those skills supposedly earned the 130-pounder the King's College amateur bantam-weight boxing championship. Sam recalled Louis joking: "All I ever received for it was a black eye."

In 1937, the newly-titled Dr. Slotin was unsuccessful in obtaining a job with Canada's National Research Council. It has been suggested that bureaucratic anti-semitism may have played a part in the NRC's decision not to hire him. Like many before him, Slotin looked south.

Later in 1937 Slotin was appointed a "Research Associate," at the University of Chicago, working on an atom-smashing cyclotron. Unfortunately, the project was poorly financed, forcing Slotin to literally work for "nothing" during a two year period. Regular contributions from his father, who was head of a Winnipeg livestock agency, helped Slotin stave off poverty.

Louis Slotin played a vital role in the construction of that first atom-smasher in the Midwest. In a letter to Slotin's parents his former Chicago colleague Henry W. Newson wrote:

> It was hard and often disappointing work. We did the machine shop work, the wiring, the plumbing and even broke up some concrete ourselves. We finally got the thing working in the fall of '38. During most of that year Louis worked on the oscillator circuits (a job like a big radio transmitter).
>
> During '39 and '40 Louis collaborated with Prof. Evans, now head of the Bio-Chemistry department. Louis made radio-carbon on the cyclotron which was fed to pigeons. The pigeon was killed later and the liver measured. All of the pigeon but the liver was biproduct [*sic*] and Louis frequently offered them to us for table purposes. However, I don't think he ever had any takers.

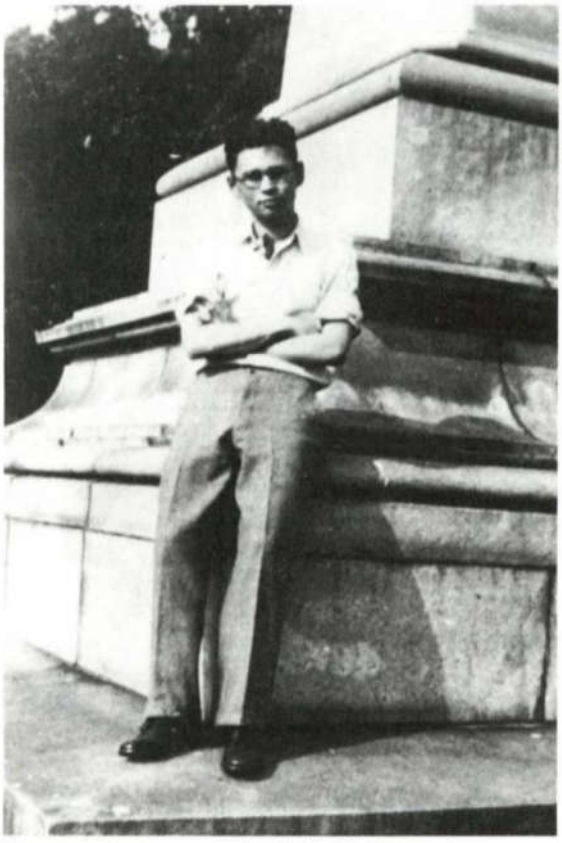
Slotin flourished in that hectic environment. He contributed to a number of papers in radiobiology before beginning to work in the Metallurgical Laboratory of the Manhattan District project when it was centralized in Chicago in 1942.

According to a 1962 University of Chicago document: "He was present on December 2, 1942, when the group of 'Met Lab' [Metallurgical Laboratory] scientists working under the late Enrico Fermi achieved man's first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction in a pile of graphite and uranium under the West Stands of Stagg Field." Newson's recollection, however, is that he and Slotin were absent when the experiment took place.

A February 1941 *Winnipeg Free Press* article, headlined "New Cancer Machine is Demonstrated", states, in part, that Slotin's work with the 80-ton University of Chicago cyclotron was "some officials of the university declare, more valuable in some ways than radium itself in the scientific study of cancer."

Slotin's scientific expertise ensured eventual ensnarement by the U.S. government's "A-Bomb Program" dragnet. In December 1944 he arrived in Los Alamos, New Mexico, headquarters of the Manhattan Project to work in the bomb physics group of R.F. Bacher. Slotin had already spent time in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, site of another part of the project, working with the German-Jewish physicist Eugen Wigner on the problem of plutonium production.

(Wigner and fellow physicist Leo Szilard, one of the first to deduce that an uranium chain reaction could lead to an atomic bomb, met with Albert Einstein on Long Island in July 1939. They were seeking to enlist the great man's support in alerting the U.S. Government to Hitler's possible plans to build an atomic bomb. That informal meeting began a process which eventually led to the launching of a multi-billion dollar A bomb program code-named the Manhattan Project.)

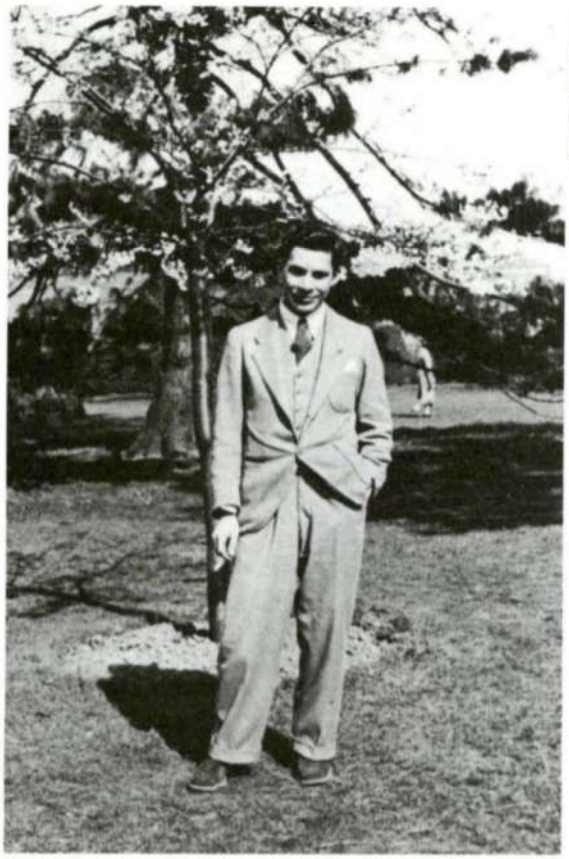


Slotin Family Collection

The young scientist poses on the plinth of the Nelson column, London, circa 1934.

It was while working at Oak Ridge that Slotin's substantial scientific and personal bravado were brazenly demonstrated during one bizarre incident. In July 1993 retired health physicist Dr. K.Z. Morgan, one of Slotin's Oak Ridge colleagues, recalled the exploit during a telephone interview with this writer:

> It was Friday afternoon and Louis wanted to shut down the reactor to make adjustments to an experiment at the bottom of the tank of water which was used to absorb radiation. We said that was impossi-



Slotin Family Collection

Slotin at an unknown location, late 1930s or early 1940. He told his friends that he had fought in Spain.

ble, and we planned to shut down the reactor that weekend.

When we came back on Monday morning, I found that Louis had stripped down to his shorts, dived into the tank and made the adjustments under water. I was appalled that anyone would take such risks. It shows what kind of person he was. He was like a cowboy — but a good experimental scientist.

Despite denouncing Los Alamos as "a disorganized mess" Slotin, notes H.W. Newson, "went to work with the same energy he always showed and was soon enjoying himself." He quickly developed an "unrivalled reputation at assembling [the] critical firing mechanism for the atomic bomb."

Slotin soon became a master practitioner of the dangerous bomb "assembling" skill. In fact, as a 1986 *Toronto Star* story on Slotin notes "... he had put together the core of the first atomic bomb detonated (code named 'Trinity') by the U.S. Army in the New Mexico desert on 16 July 1945." One of Slotin's most prized possessions was a scribbled receipt he received upon delivering the "Trinity" atomic bomb to army personnel. It represented the "culmination of the whole $2 billion effort" of the Manhattan Project. For his efforts, Slotin had been dubbed the "chief armourer of the United States."

He also received two tiny, round, lead and silver commemorative pins. They are each engraved with a dominant "A" riding over the words "BOMB" and "Manhattan Project".

Nevertheless, Slotin, to his dismay, was prevented from travelling to the Tinian Island air base in the South Pacific, the launching site of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, because "he was still a Canadian citizen several weeks short of his final American papers." However, an officially signed 18 February 1946 Permit indicated that Slotin, now a U.S. citizen, was slated to attend the Operation Crossroads test at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

Despite his seeming zeal, there are hints that Slotin may not have been enamoured of atom bombs, *per se.* In a 1982 *Winnipeg Free Press* story journalist Val Werier writes that Slotin's father "was astonished to hear after Hiroshima that his son had been working on the atomic bomb." The response was: "We had to get it before the Germans."

Winnipeg lawyer Israel Ludwig, Slotin's nephew, recalls his mother saying that "Uncle Lou was troubled by what he was doing" in Los Alamos, while Beth Shore, Slotin's niece, says that during the 1960s ban the bomb movement the family "kept quiet" about her uncle's work at Los Alamos, especially since the accident "brought such devastation" to the family. Furthermore, in November 1989, Philip Morrison, in a terse note to me scribbled at the bottom of my letter of inquiry to him, wrote that he and Slotin "talked a good deal about war and peace." In fact, Slotin, whose talents were still required at Los Alamos after the war, was eagerly planning to resume peacetime research at the University of Chicago into both biophysics and radiobiology. He had, technically, only been on a leave-of-absence from the University of Chicago.

In a March 1946 letter to Professor Raymond E. Zirkle of the Institute of Radiobiology and Biophysics at the University of Chicago, Slotin revealed the dilemma confronting him: "I have become involved in the Navy tests, much to my disgust. The reason for this is that I am one of the few people left here who are experienced bomb putter-togetherers."

Then the fatal accident happened. It had been ominously augured by a very similar tragedy six months earlier. Harry Daglian, Slotin's friend and laboratory assistant, had fallen victim to "the invisible killer". Deeply saddened by the mishap, Slotin spent many hours at his assistant's bedside during the month it took Daglian to die.

Thomas Brock quotes from a June 1946 letter from Emily Morrison, Philip Morrison's wife, to a friend. It

reveals the "series of strange coincidences" involved in both mishaps: "Both Louis' and Harry Daglian's accidents occurred on Tuesday the 21st; both used the same piece of material; and both died in the same room in the hospital."

After the 24-year-old Daglian's death, Nobel Laureate Enrico Fermi warned Slotin that he wouldn't last a year — "if you keep doing that experiment."

Following the Daglian accident two tiny spacers were developed to prevent the beryllium spheres from closing completely together. It was hoped that this would prevent similar incidents. But Slotin preferred a hands-on approach to experimentation.

Raemer E. Schreiber, a Slotin colleague who still lives in Los Alamos, stated in a 1993 letter to the author:

I'm quite sure that several of us knew that he was using the Pu [plutonium] hemispheres for demonstrations of simple critical assemblies, but were not aware of his unsafe method until it was too late. After all, he was the expert in this work. But he should have never made the assembly by lowering the upper section down onto the lower one so a slip would close the gap and make the system supercritical. He should have fixed the upper assembly in position and raised the lower section gradually to increase the reactivity. Then if anything slipped, the assembly would open harmlessly. Louis knew this, of course, but apparently thought he could get by with the simpler assembly.

Slotin's death ended all hands-on critical assembly work at Los Alamos. We immediately started work on a remote control system with the critical assembly

United States of America

WAR
DEPARTMENT

ARMY SERVICE FORCES ~ CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Manhattan District

This is to Certify that

LOUIS SLOTIN
Clinton Laboratories

has participated in work essential to the production of the Atomic Bomb, thereby contributing to the successful conclusion of World War II. This certificate is awarded in appreciation of effective service.

6 August 1945

Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War

Washington, D. C.

equipment and the operating crew separated by roughly a quarter mile. We had no more criticality deaths or injuries.

Tributes, of all sorts, came in following Slotin's death. On 14 June 1946 the *Los Alamos Times* published "Slotin — A Tribute", a poem by associate editor Thomas P. Ashlock. It began:

> May God receive you, great-souled scientist!
> While you were with us, even strangers knew
> The breadth and lofty stature of your mind
> 'Twas only in the crucible of death
> We saw at last your noble heart revealed.

Bob Stewart, a friend and former assistant of Louis Slotin's at Oak Ridge, expressed a sentiment shared by many: "Louis was a source of inspiration to all of us ... he would always insist upon taking the greatest risk himself. Those of us who know him know that the world has lost one of its foremost scientists."

The Louis A. Slotin Memorial Fund was initiated in 1948 by Slotin's colleagues at Los Alamos and the University of Chicago. A series of 15 presentations, all held at the university, were given by such distinguished men of science as J. Robert Oppenheimer, scientific head of the Manhattan Project, and Nobel Laureates Luis W. Alvarez and Hans A. Bethe. Those memorial lectures lasted until 1962 when funds ran out.

In September 1946, in response to a request for a contribution to the fund, Robert B. Brode, a professor of physics at Berkeley, wrote a revealing letter to University of Chicago colleague Professor Samuel K. Alison:

> I am enclosing a small contribution for your memorial fund for Louis Slotin. The exact details of how he was killed are not readily available to those physicists who worked on the engineering end of the job rather than pure physics. I gathered, however, from the comments [of others] who have been through here that the whole affair was a scandal.
>
> I gather from the comments I have heard regarding the Slotin affair that he himself was guilty of negligence and that the absence of automatic safeguards was in large measure due to Slotin's insistence that they were not necessary. I believe that more good would be done in establishing an award to be given each year to the outstanding contribution towards safety in handling hazardous radioactive materials or in recognition of successful accident-free programs. Some publicity of the outstanding ideas or of the successful research programs with hazardous materials will certainly help to reduce the type of accident in which Slotin died.

Followup studies suggest that three of the seven survivors of the Omega Lab accident died years later from complications that might have been caused by exposure to radiation. While Clifford Honicker maintains that the U.S. "government response to that tragedy established a pattern of secrecy that still persists."

According to my 1993 telephone interview with Roger Meade, the official archivist/historian at the Los Alamos lab: "Everything during that time period was automatically classified; but as folks ask for things we get them declassified. For many years the accident affected people's lives, and nobody was really interested in telling the story. The physicists tried to put their lives back together. People think that it's been swept under the rug, but it really hasn't been."

Today, the ultra-modern Los Alamos facility, whose researchers devote less than "50 per cent" of their time to weapons work, has some 7,800 employees and spreads out over 43 square miles. A portion of the original Pajarito Canyon lab where the accident occurred is still standing.

There is no doubt that Louis Slotin died a hero. While he was waiting for death in his hospital room at Los Alamos the authorities issued a special citation which was read to him:

> Dr. Slotin's quick reaction at the immediate risk of his own life prevented a more serious development of the experiment which would certainly have resulted in the death of the seven men working with him, as well as serious injury to others in the general vicinity.
>
> He had that to think about as the darkness closed in. ◆

Martin Zeilig is a Winnipeg freelance writer.

Fire from the Sun

Not only will atomic power be released, but someday we will harness the rise and fall of the tides and imprison the rays of the sun.
— Thomas A. Edison, 1921.

In some crude sense, which no vulgarity, no humour, no overstatement can quite extinguish, the physicists have known sin and this is a knowledge which they cannot lose.
— J. Robert Oppenheimer, 1947.

It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe.
— Harry S. Truman, 1945.

Since the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima the atom has become a spectre threatening us with annihilation.
— Max Born, 1957.

Tyrant of the Ottawa Valley

The Highland laird who planted the Clan McNab in colonial Canada

BY BERNARD SHAW

Scottish National Portrait Gallery

Archibald, 13th Laird of McNab, by an unknown artist, probably painted in Canada.

Archibald McNab, chief of the Clan McNab, ruled an Ottawa Valley feudal empire early in the last century. After twenty tumultuous years he returned, defeated, to Scotland. He left his name to an Ottawa Valley township where his imprint is still visible.

The McNabs have been traced back to the eighth century and the abbot of St. Filian's monastery in Glen Dochart, Perthshire, who evidently was not sworn entirely to celibacy. The Celtic word *Mac-an-Abba* means "son of the abbot" and the form has changed little over the years. Various contemporary records have the spelling *Macnab*, *MacNab*, *Macnabb* and *McNab*: for clarity, the latter version is used here. Despite backing the losing side against Robert Bruce, the McNabs prospered in Perthshire. In 1336 Gilbert McNab received a charter under the Great Seal for "The Barony of Bovain in Glendochart" together with the motto *Timos omnis abesto*, loosely translated as "Fear nothing". The McNab lairds were colourful autocrats demonstrating family characteristics of generosity, aggressiveness and love of tradition together with what was to be the essence of Archibald's problems, poor financial judgement.

Born at Bovain in Glen Dochert, probably in 1778, Archibald was the only son of Robert MacNab. (The only daughter, Anne, married Robert Jamieson and their Canadian-born son, Allan Napier MacNab, became Prime Minister of Canada from 1854 to 1856.) The young Archibald was educated by Scottish Presbyterian school masters. He aspired to join the legal profession and possibly undertook some formal training in London. His parents sent him to Paris "to polish his rough Highland manner with Gallic charm." His apprenticeship was successful as later demonstrated by his ability to entangle tenants in a legal web and to captivate the colonial government.

A cock-fighting episode in London illustrates Archibald's character. He is alleged to have craftily engineered a 2,000 guinea wager and then produced a starving male eagle from Scotland which soon made mincemeat of its English cockerel opponent. The same source has him then going to Paris where he "chose his companions from the elegant riff-raff of the city" and "slipped gradually downwards into a life of wild Bohemianism."

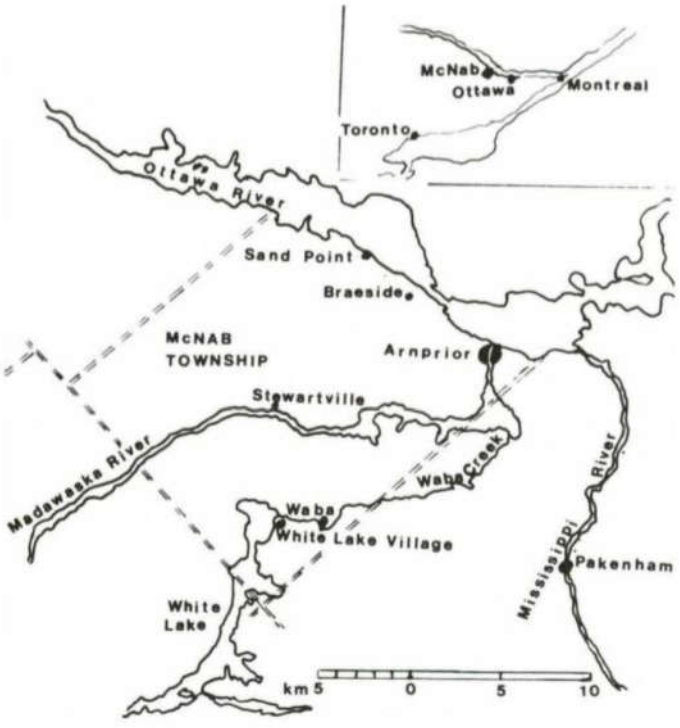
Around 1802, Archibald married Margaret Robinson of Edinburgh. They had six children, but only one, Sarah Ann, lived past 20 years, dying in 1894 at the age of 91. Margaret left her husband, taking the surviving

children, before Archibald departed for Canada. There were no grandchildren and this family plays no further significant part in the story.

Archibald became chief of the McNab Clan in 1816 when his childless uncle, Francis, the 12th laird and last in direct succession, died. Raeburn's portrait of Francis still adorns bottles of Dewar's Highland Whisky, possibly in recognition of his passion for their contents. The precarious financial state of his inheritance forced the new laird to sell or mortgage most of the estate. One parcel realized £80,000 which he is reputed to have squandered in Paris. The Earl of Breadalbane was the principal creditor and his ancestor's commission to secure submission of the clans after the 1689 rebellion may have been at the root of McNab's financial problems.

McNab came to Canada in 1821 or 1822, but not as an immigrant. He planned to obtain a large land grant, settle his clansmen and, through their labour, to restore the McNab fortune. His intention was to return and enjoy the adulation he believed to be his right as hereditary chieftain of a Scottish Highland clan.

The colonial government of Upper Canada watched land development companies in the United States succeed while their own immigration schemes barely compensated for the southward exodus of Canadians. The "Family Compact", which effectively ruled Upper Canada, welcomed the charismatic and charming aristocrat bringing innovative ideas. McNab shared with the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, the same conservative, militaristic prejudices and contempt for men not of their class. Nevertheless, the promoter had a difficult time launching his enterprise.



McNab's proposal of February 1823 that Torbolton Township on the Ottawa River should be held for his settlement scheme was rejected by Maitland. In October the same fate befell his petition to designate "a township beyond Fitzroy" for the same purpose. Maitland's confidential note to Lord Bathurst, Minister for War and the Colonies, contains an accurate prediction: "I have yielded to this gentleman's request that I would transmit his petition although I feel convinced that the plan he proposes would be attended with very great risk to himself, and can hardly fail to prove embarrassing to the government."

Always tenacious, McNab lobbied with the Surveyor-General, the Attorney-General and all the senior officials he could button-hole. He warned that his clansmen would go to the United States without the encouragement of their chief to come to Canada. Maitland had a change of heart and his cautious note to Lord Bathurst says the laird "appeared very solicitous to avoid further delay."

On 5 November 1823 the Executive Council of Upper Canada approved McNab's scheme to settle Wilmot Township. A condition imposed was that the township should be under McNab's sole direction for 18 months followed by a review. Each family was to receive not less than 100 acres and be obligated to repay with interest advances made by McNab on their behalf. They were given the option to pay off the debt within seven years. McNab acquired 1,200 acres with another 5,000 promised "on completion of settlement of the township".

Wilmot Township, located around the junction of the Madawaska and Ottawa rivers, was named after Robert John Wilmot (he later changed his name to Horton), author of a British scheme to encourage emigration to Canada. One of McNab's first actions was to rename the township after himself. A survey of McNab Township was completed by John McNaughton in the summer of 1824, allowing settlement to proceed.

McNab presented himself as the owner of 80,000 acres of fine wooded land which only needed to be cleared for farming. The facts were somewhat different. He did not own the land. The area was closer to 68,000 acres with half lying in the rocks of the Canadian Shield. The soil was thin and sandy with organic material and minerals poorly combined and often suffering from poor or excessive drainage.

The laird sold the bill of goods to his cousin and agent in Scotland, Dr. Francis Hamilton Buchanan: "I have the pleasure of reporting that the Governor of

Canada has very properly invited me to take possession of a large territory, to administer it on behalf of the Government, and to lead there so many of my people as are willing to come." He goes on to clearly set out his intent: "I will not rest content until I see around me my people, on their own land, under the control of their own chief."

Buchanan went to work and, according to his listing, 138 individuals including 28 family heads signed a "Bond". They undertook to pay the laird £36 for each family head, £30 for his wife and £16 for each child, with interest, either in money or produce. At that time, a steerage transatlantic ticket cost about £4 but McNab also had to provide transportation onward from Quebec City or Montreal.

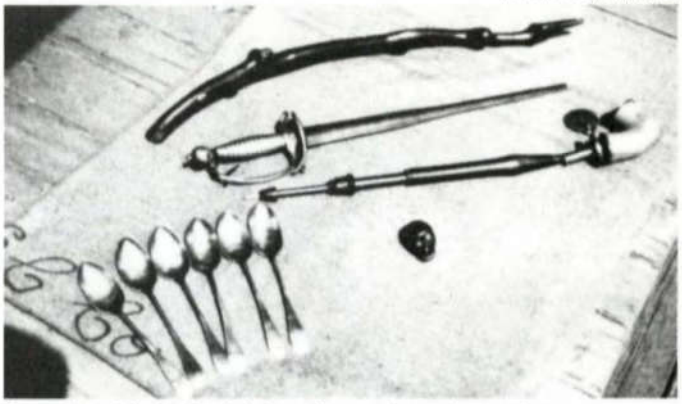
Some of the original batch of Highland settlers must have experienced a change of heart as they did not board the 276-ton brig *Niagara* at Greenock. None died during the voyage and McNab's count on their arrival at Quebec City on 18 May 1825 totalled only 115. He and his piper, James McNee, gave them a Highland welcome and shepherded them to McNab Township. Their route was by boat to Montreal and by foot and bateaux to Hull on the Ottawa River. They had a relatively easy trip to Aylmer in a steamer owned by Philemon Wright, the founder of Hull. Smaller boats carried them to Chat's Falls from where they had to walk over rough forest trails to Kinnell Lodge, McNab's grandiose log home overlooking the Madawaska and Ottawa rivers. They arrived on 23 June 1825.

The settlers now faced reality. The laird's promised provisions did not materialize and their land was still mostly virgin forest. What little cash they possessed was spent on supplies and credit was stretched to the limit at stores in the neighbouring townships. The only possibilities of working for wages were blocked by the laird. While lumbering companies and established settlers could use the additional labour, McNab forbade any settler to leave the township without his permission. He tried to prevent them from learning the true state of his affairs and seeing the relative freedom existing outside McNab Township. Probably with some justification, he feared their departure without repayment of his loan. As "liege lord", he used his absolute control as a means of punishment and reward.

Tightening his grasp, McNab insisted that every family head sign a "Location Ticket". In a solemn ceremony at Kinnell Lodge, the settler and the laird both signed a legalistic document. It defined the settler's holding, which was free of rent for three years, and promised title "upon your having done the settlement duties and your granting me a mortgage upon said lands." It continued, "You will yearly thereafter pay to me, my heirs and successors for ever one bushel of wheat or Indian corn, or oats of like value, for every cleared acre on said Lot." The ticket had little strength in law but the settlers, many of them speaking only Gaelic and illiterate, believed it to be a lifetime pledge of service to the laird — an impression which McNab did everything in his power to consolidate.

Word of McNab's treatment of the first group of settlers reached Buchanan in Scotland. He withdrew his services and subsequent recruiting was by McNab himself among the immigrants arriving in Montreal at their own expense. These recruits, mostly from Scotland, were also required to sign a Bond and Location Ticket. The lengthy document, similar to the preceding versions, committed the laird to convey the settler to Upper Canada and supply provisions until arrival on their own lands. In return for 100 acres the settler agreed to pay £35 for each adult male, £25 for each woman and each child over 14 years, and £15 for each child under 14 years. For every cleared acre, the settler agreed to pay one bushel of wheat or equivalent per year "for ever," starting three years after taking possession of his land. A condition imposed was that the total debt, plus interest at five percent per annum, should be paid within seven years. "Then his land shall be forever clear of encumbrance."

Peter Hessel (Box papers)



These relics of the laird include his walking stick, sword, meerschaum pipe, snuff box and six spoons with the McNab crest and motto.

The laird had his settlers entangled in legalistic claptrap, in debt and confined to his isolated feudal empire with the tacit support of an aloof and self-interested colonial administration.

The settlers did not, at first, see one bushel of wheat per cleared acre as an unreasonable rent. Average farmland in Scotland yielded thirty bushels per acre. Their new land, however, was so poor that, eventually, some farmers stopped clearing land because of the one bushel levy. The fact that they had no need to pay rent at all was a foreign concept. The feudal system had been the way of life in the Scottish Highlands for generations.

The laird owned the land and squeezed as much profit from it as he could. Although feudalism was officially abolished in Britain in 1662, this made little impact in the Highlands: the aristocracy still expected homage, obedience and prompt rent payment. The settlers were programmed to be serfs.

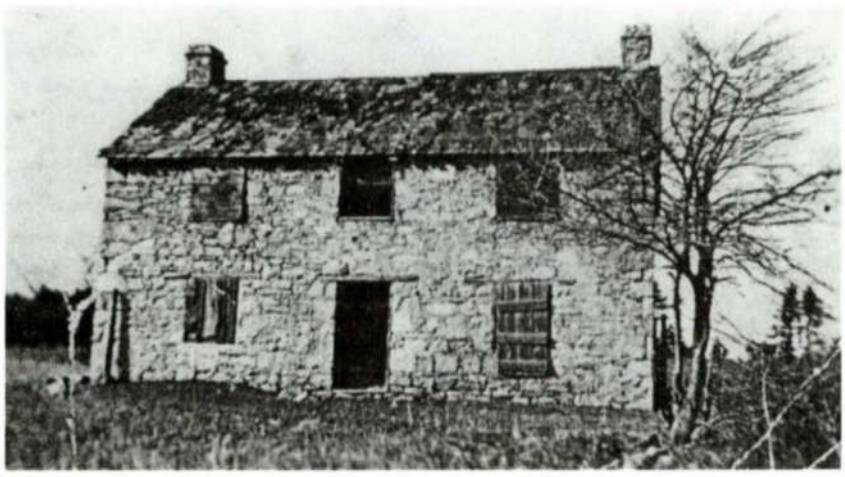
The Highlanders had little choice but to accede to McNab's demands. The Napoleonic Wars were over and unemployment was rampant in Scotland. Mechanization of the textile mills put thousands more out of work. A succession of poor crops led to destitution for many. The only escape was emigration. It was encouraged by the British government and the lure of 100 acres of "free" land must have been irresistible.

"Squatter" in the nineteenth century was an honourable term. Before McNab arrived several squatter families had followed the logging trails into the unsurveyed wilderness and established farms, hoping to later gain official title to their land. Within six weeks of his arrival, McNab brought these potential malcontents into line. With a promise of land title, he exacted signatures from six family heads on Bonds similar to those signed by his own imports. He imposed no travel fee and reduced the rent to 1/2 bushel of wheat, or equivalent, per cleared acre to a maximum of 50 acres. The squatters agreed not to cut timber for commercial purposes and not to relinquish their land without "special licence and consent" of the laird.

There is no evidence that McNab provided the report on his first 18-months' activities as required in his charter. There are indications that this omission was by informal agreement with the authorities. There also appears to have been a tacit understanding that he should be the beneficiary of all fees paid to cut lumber in the township.

Most settlers managed to clear some land and survive for the first three years. Then the rents became due and imposed an intolerable burden on families already struggling to survive. In 1826, before any rent was due, desperate Alexander Miller, school teacher turned farmer, sold pine trees to logger Jack Brill. In response to McNab's demands that he should be paid for the trees, Brill threatened to "rope end" the autocratic laird. Grievously insulted, McNab ran to his government friends who endorsed his demands. Brill had to pay McNab and Miller ended up with nothing.

McNab refused Miller permission to leave the township in order to find work and feed his family. Miller left anyway to labour for a farmer in Nepean Township. The laird immediately called in the full £80 owing. Miller was unable to pay so McNab had him arrested and jailed in Perth, the administrative centre some 80 kilometres away. Here he languished for six weeks until neighbours heard of his plight and provided bail. The neighbours, John and Peter McIntyre, James McFarlane, Donald McNaughton and James McDonald, were immediately listed as "black sheep" in McNab's "Doomsday Book". Miller's case came to trial in April 1827. The court ruled against him and his friends forfeited their bail payments of £50 each — an enormous financial blow which gave the laird much satisfaction.



Peter Hessel (Box papers)

Waba Cottage, the laird's White Lake home between 1835 and 1845. The vacant building was demolished by dynamite in 1936.

In 1827 a settler brought with him news that turned McNab into a bitter man without hope of returning to the family estate in Perthshire. The remaining McNab property had been sold "by public roup or private bargain" to repay loans for which they were pledged. Earl Breadalbane, as the largest creditor, closed the deal in his own favour and it was clear to McNab that he would no longer be welcome in Glen Dochart.

The settlers began to voice their objections to McNab's rule. An anonymous complaint in 1827 to Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Colborne regarding the injustices inflicted by McNab was, however, not considered worthy of official attention. It was referred to

McNab who seized the opportunity to accuse a suspected malcontent, Alexander McNab (no relation), of "libel, sedition and high treason". The laird, a Justice of the Peace, acted as complainant, witness and judge and had the terrified settler thrown into Perth jail. He languished there for six weeks until "the ridiculous charges" were thrown out at the Assizes.

Pleas for help began to escape from McNab's net. A formal petition in 1829 was rejected by the government which appeared sympathetic but saw no reason to intervene. A similar plea in 1830 for deliverance from the feudal system resulted in an investigation by the government and a promise by the laird — which was not kept — to reduce the rents by half.

John McIntyre, friend of Allan Miller, aroused the laird's enmity again in August 1834. The frightened laird blamed him for an attack by a lynx while hunting raccoons. In the middle of the following winter, McNab called a township meeting at McIntyre's farm during which the Deputy Sheriff of Perth seized all the settler's cattle, demonstrating the laird's power to all the community.

In 1835 McNab conscripted his settlers to build a stone house about 12 miles inland from the Ottawa River, close to the outlet of Waba Creek from White Lake. He reports on "Waba Cottage" to the government in November 1838: "I have built another good stone house with complete offices, and the Grist and Saw Mills for the accommodation of my settlers and the public." It was never used for the purposes stated and served as a residence for McNab, his common-law wife Catherine, their son Allan and daughter Kitty. After McNab's departure, Catherine stayed in the cottage until her death in 1880 when the property went to Rebecca Alston, re-married widow of Allan who died in 1859. She willed the property to her daughter Violet who married Alexander Box. Correspondence from the laird to Allan had been passed down and became known as the "Box Papers." It was thought that these valuable documents were lost in 1936 when the Box family objected to being "pestered to death by visitors and picnic parties who trampled down potato and corn crops." Provincial government overtures to preserve the site as a museum were not welcomed and Waba Cottage was demolished by a few sticks of dynamite. In 1967, John and Harry Box, Violet's sons, donated the ruins and eight acres to the Township and Waba Cottage was reconstructed as a Centennial Project. Most of the original stone had disappeared and local opinion today ranges from pride in the reconstructed building to resentment because its existence inhibits the construction of a more historically-accurate memorial. It is now a museum and contains relics of McNab's time.

A fervent supporter of the establishment, the laird raised the 20th Battalion of the Carleton Light Infantry from McNab and adjacent townships to help quell the 1837 Rebellion. McNab's friend Lieutenant-Governor Sir James Bond Head appointed him colonel. Near-mutiny resulted when McNab, as commanding officer, read the Articles of War to the troops mustered at Sand Point. An explanatory petition from the rebels to Bond Head attests to the loyalty of the 82 signatories but continues: "That a number of us have suffered severely from McNab through the course of the Civil Law, and are therefore afraid to come under him in the Martial Law, being harsh in his disposition, and also inexperienced." Bond Head's curt reply placates the petitioners by stating that martial law had not been proclaimed and arrangements made between The McNab and his followers were of a purely personal nature, and beyond the control of the government.

The 20th Battalion was not called to active service although McNab did call out the troops again on 11 November 1838. An American raiding party led by Von Schoultz had crossed the St. Lawrence and the laird asked for volunteers to help repel the invasion. Most men from adjacent townships stepped forward but the "McNabbers" refused to fight under the laird. The difference in opinion developed into outright battle with many injuries from which one man later died. The "Battle of Pakenham" is noted as "perhaps the only engagement in British or Canadian history fought entirely between soldiers of the same battalion."

The recall of Bond Head following his inept handling of the 1837-38 rebellions was a severe blow to McNab's influence at court. The subsequent enquiry by Lord Durham into the colonial government's administration led to an improved and more impartial administration which ultimately benefitted the McNab settlers (and led to the union of Upper and Lower Canada).

Sundry attempts by McNab to obtain Executive Council approval of further land grants fell on deaf ears, but some sympathy remained for the autocrat who was, despite his problems, one of the ruling class. It was decided that compensation should be given to him for outlays in bringing settlers to Canada. Only 16 family heads of the approximately 142 families settled in McNab Township by 1840 admitted that McNab had paid their passage from Scotland. The Executive Council settled on a cash award of £1,000 and another £3,000 to be paid from the proposed sale of land to settlers. At the same time one of McNab's prime sources of income was eliminated. He was forbidden to cut lumber except on his own land which was identified as 850 acres, presumably reduced from the original 1,200 by private sales.

Allan Stewart, one of the first settlers and "a gentleman of some literary pretensions," was the author of most petitions addressed to the government. He likely had assistance from well-educated Dugald Campbell

McNab but petitions dated January and July 1838 had little effect. A pivotal meeting at Stewart's farm in June 1840 moved for the execution of McNab but calmer heads prevailed. It was decided to concentrate the attack in two areas where McNab appeared to be most vulnerable — his misappropriation of road building statute labour, which he had directed to his own benefit and used as a means of punishing the settlers, and the diversion of some £3,000 in logging fees into his own pocket. The new Governor-General of British North America, Lord Sydenham, reacted by ordering an investigation of McNab's operation by Francis Allan, Crown Land Agent for the Bathurst District in Perth.

Allan spent most of the 1840 summer investigating the strange occurrences in McNab Township. His report of November 1840 endorses "the wanton oppression and outrages of humanity which the settlers allege against McNab." He reported that the laird did not spend his own money on behalf of the settlers; failed to provide roads and misappropriated the statute labour; failed to provide provisions; fraudulently collected timber duties; illegally collected rent payments; profited from land sales; and threatened and harassed the settlers.

In common with most other early reporters of McNab's machinations, Allan goes to extremes. His account loses credibility and hints at partisanship because McNab had undoubtedly paid for the passage of some Highlanders. This error provided fuel for McNab's rebuttal, a lengthy smoke screen with no answer to many of the charges.

Nothing transpired from Allan's report until the settlers pressed for action in May 1841. An Order-in-Council the following August gave the settlers, who hoped for free title to their land, some satisfaction. They would be allowed to purchase their lands over nine years at a value assessed "as if in a state of nature" with the payment going not to McNab but to the Crown Lands Agent.

McNab's tactics had generated deep-seated enmity in most settlers and few paid rent to him, even if they were able. McNab sought the support of his friends in government. He asked for assistance in evicting delinquent farmers and wanted a "Deed of Trust" over their property. The government recommended that he be given "every assistance" but stopped short of giving him control of the vacated land. The laird acted in August 1841. With the help of the sheriff, he evicted Duncan McNab (no relation) and his family, resulting in the near-death of two children hiding in a barn when all the buildings were set alight. Duncan McNab laid charges against the laird who was arrested and brought to the magistrates at nearby Pakenham. The case was referred to the Assizes at Perth. Duncan McNab could not afford the time to travel the longer distance or the money to pursue litigation, so the case was dropped.

The ice was getting thinner but McNab was still skating. His friends in the House of Assembly were successful in stalling publication of Allan's report until 1842 when it became a political hot potato. Francis Hincks, editor of the Toronto weekly, *Examiner,* took up the cause. Although there was an element of self-interest in Hincks' action — he became a member of the legislature in 1841 — he did expose the situation in McNab Township to public scrutiny. McNab sued him for libel and claimed £1,000 damages. McNab both won and lost the case in May 1842. A legal victory was

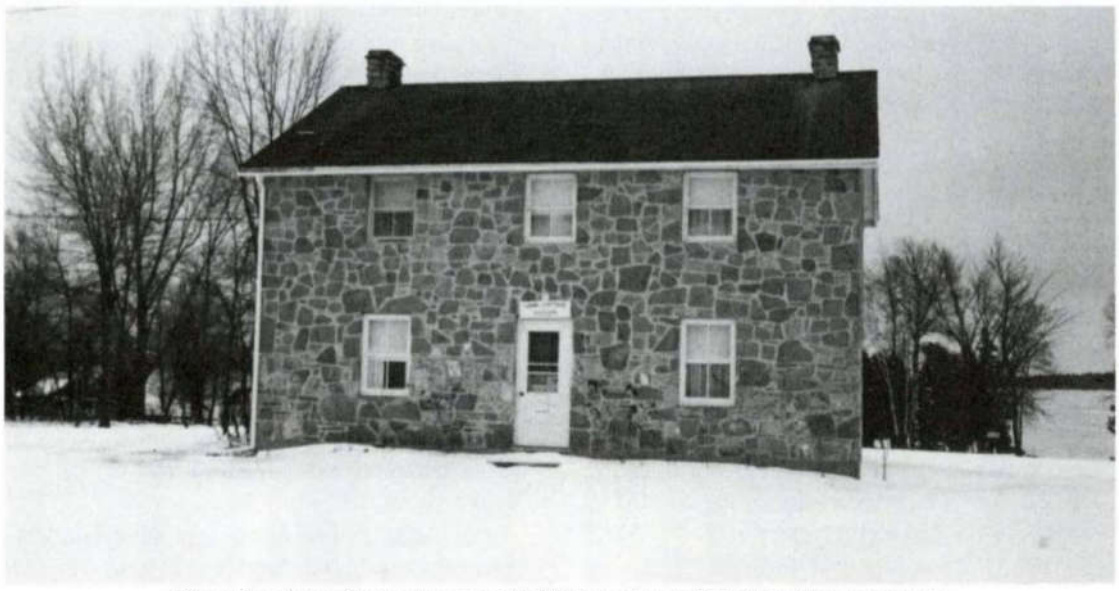
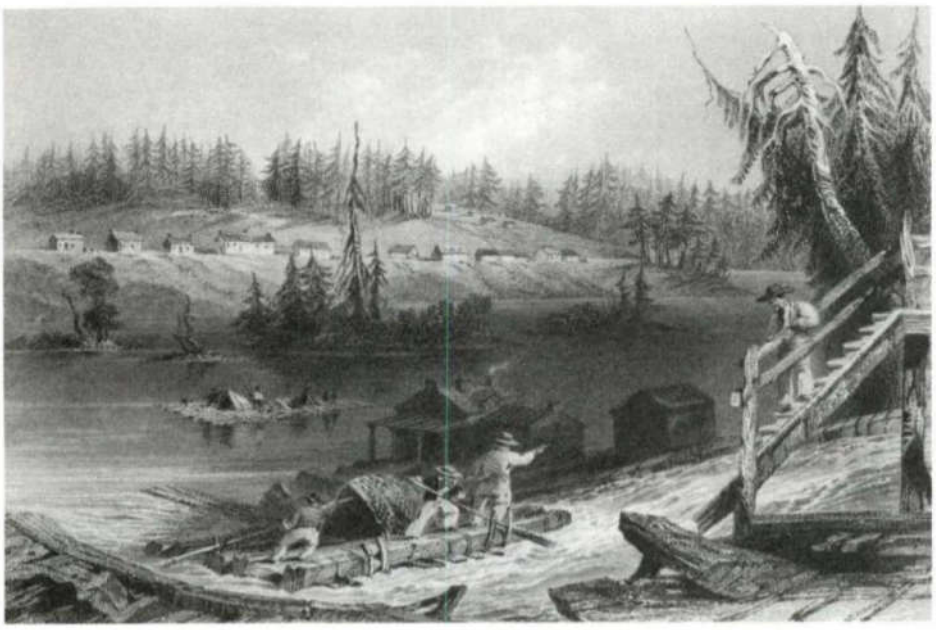


Photo by Bernard Shaw

This replica of Waba Cottage was erected in 1967 as a Centennial Project. It is now a museum.



A view of the timber slide at Les Chats on the Ottawa by W.H. Bartlett, early nineteenth century. The first McNab settlers walked through the bush to Kinnell Lodge from this location.

balanced by the award of damages in the amount £5 — interpreted as the value of McNab's character. McNab had become a political liability and his influential friends were avoiding him.

The decisive series of events arose from McNab's vendetta against John Paris who started to erect a grist mill at the third falls of Waba Creek in 1840. The laird's tenant, William Yuill, operated a saw mill upstream at the first falls. McNab ordered Yuill not to sell construction materials to Paris who, nevertheless, persevered and completed his grist mill. The local farmers welcomed the new mill which promised to save them a lengthy trip to have their grain processed outside McNab Township. McNab ordered extra boards added to Yuill's dam and cut off the water supply to the new grist mill. A bonus for McNab was the hardship suffered by the farmers who were forced to reclaim their grain from Paris before trekking to outside mills.

Twisting the knife, McNab commenced building his own grist mill adjacent to Yuill's saw mill. He made a tactical blunder and located the new building on the 4th Concession road allowance, committing the sin of blocking Her Majesty's Highway. The settlers obtained a court order to stop McNab's grist mill and the long-suffering Paris, still without water, at last took McNab to court in May 1843. McNab had to free the water and Paris was awarded damages of £114. The laird did pay his £35 share of the damages but Yuill fled to the United States without paying his quota. Paris later became Reeve of McNab Township.

McNab's star waned following the court's decision. He spent long periods away from McNab Township and departed for the last time in 1845. His subsequent activities are not clear, but he did live for a time with his cousin, Sir Allan Napier MacNab in Hamilton, Ontario and he probably went to the United States. There is a note of triumph in one account of the proud chief's defeat: "No more tragic comment can there be on the laird's departure from Canada than that is was unreported." It appears most likely that he arrived in the Orkney Islands in 1851 where he rented, purchased or inherited the "White House of Breck" at Rendall, West Mainland.

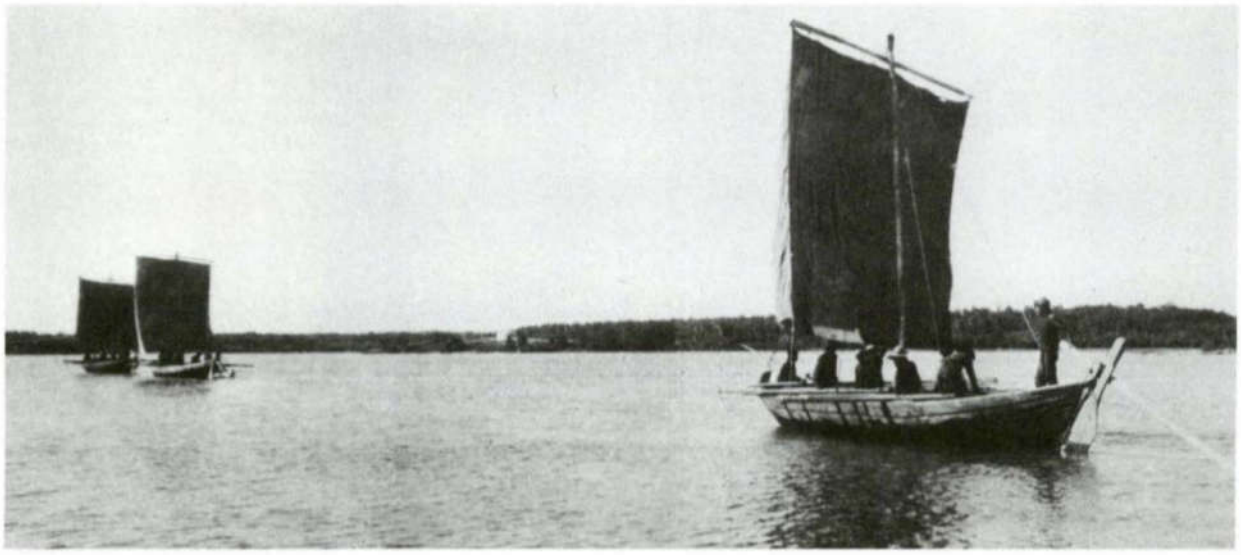
At the age of 77 in 1855, McNab married 18-year-old Elizabeth Marshall. He may not have been aware that his first wife, Margaret, was still alive. Since he married Elizabeth in church (St. Mary-le-Bone in London) it is assumed that the first marriage was annulled. The newly-weds moved to Lannion in France. At Paris in 1858 Elizabeth gave birth to their daughter, Anne Elizabeth, who has living descendants.

McNab's death on 12 August 1860 presents a mystery. One report has him dying at "Lanion, a small fishing village near Boulogne." Lannion is about 500 kilometres from Boulogne and the authorities there can find no record of Archibald McNab.

Archibald McNab's claim to fame as the Last Laird of the Clan McNab was shattered in 1954. Archibald Corrie McNab, a retired British civil servant born in 1887, convinced the Lord Lyon, King of Arms, that his ancestry went back to the McNabs in the 1600s and that he was, *de jure*, the 22nd Laird of the Clan McNab. ◆

Bernard Shaw is an Ottawa business consultant with an interest in the history of the Ottawa Valley.

North with the Red River Brigade



By WILLIAM CORNWALLIS KING

As told to Mary Weekes

One day at Lower Fort Garry in 1863, the Governor sent for me. "It is the first of June," said he. "The Red River brigade leaves on the 3rd. We have decided to send you north with it." I was a bit taken aback, I must confess. But I answered, "I am looking forward to the adventure."

"You'll find hard work and responsibility there," answered the Governor. "Many of the young clerks in the North complain about the monotony." I said, "As if the fur business could be monotonous!" The Governor smiled. "The North is one place where men of imagination are needed. You'll do well in the northern service."

That was a great day, the day we left the fort. On the banks of the Red River lay the first section of the brigade — three boats — ready to set off on their perilous trip to Fort Simpson, of over 2,000 miles. Through the banging of guns, the salute of cannon, the cheering of the crowds, I was conscious of a great uplift. The whole colony, about three or four hundred people, had come to cheer us on our way.

Baptiste Bruce, a celebrated boat guide of the North, was in charge. Under his sharp quick commands, the crew looked to their cargo. And Bruce inspected it himself, examining the lashings carefully. The complement of each boat was from seventy-five to one hundred packages of one hundred pounds each and the value estimated at $5,000. The cargo load of the entire brigade, nine boats, was estimated at from $45,000 to $50,000.

All this cargo was entrusted to one man, Baptiste Bruce, for safe carriage over the treacherous waters to Methy Portage. I can still hear Bruce's commands. They came short and clear. At his word, when everything about the long low open boats had been made safe, the crew fell into their places. We had a crew of eight men: a steersman, a bowsman, six middlemen. Although I was the officer in charge of the brigade, I took the place Bruce assigned me with the men.

Suddenly, through the noise of the send-off, one word rang out, *Embarque*! That call was more potent than any military reveille. With a shout the men grasped their oars. The boats shot out from their moorings. The men sang in time to their oars. In the bow of my boat, Baptiste Bruce stood, like a figurehead, calm, rigid. As we drew farther and farther away, the voices of

the crowd, whose very existence depended upon the returns of the fur cargoes, grew fainter. I looked at the rowers. Beads of sweat stood round and silvery on their hairy breasts and between their powerful brown shoulders. The Great Voyage had begun!

Away we went. A slight wind filled the sails and carried the boat down the river, relieving the oarsmen. Only the bowsman and steersman stood in their places. I sat atop the cargo thrilled. "Too bad," I said after a while, "that the second section of the brigade isn't with us. In case of trouble, they could stand by."

"Nothing like that!" said Bruce. "We have men enough here to handle anything. You will see. Suppose we, and Lesperance with the second section of this brigade, should arrive at the rapids and the portages together? There is not enough room on the portages. The men would be standing on one foot while we unloaded, portaged our cargo, and hauled our boats up the river. There is plenty of reason why Lesperance should not leave the Fort for two or three days yet!"

Well, being a greenhorn, I didn't see. But I let it go. After a while the wind died down. Even when the wind was right we could make only fair speed, drifting. I began to think it was a pretty tame business. I moved about examining the boat furnishings and chatting with the men who sat or lay upon the taut tarpaulins. The sun was hot.

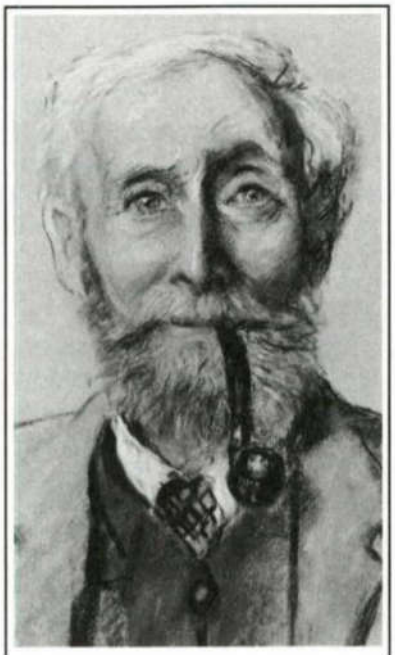
I was clerk-in-charge of this great brigade bound for Fort Simpson, thence back to York Factory. I was responsible for supervising the landing and receiving of cargoes at the portages and posts. I had the responsibility of the delivery and reception of official letters at each post on our route. I should have felt a man of affairs. I knew that I was not much more than super-cargo. I felt mighty green.

The actual commander of the brigade was Baptiste Bruce. From the moment he put his foot into the first boat of the brigade until the boat touched shore, no matter where, he was in complete command. No other officer of the Company, no matter what his rank, even the Governor of the Company himself, dared interfere. And there was wisdom in these rules as you will see.

Great fellows, those guides. And the boatmen. Men too! Their physique would do credit to the ancient Greeks. And how they could sing! In Scotch, French, English, and Indian of many dialects.

The York Boats were built in the colony by Company shipbuilders. Of native spruce, they had a thirty-three-foot keel and an eight-foot beam. They were designed to travel over lakes, rivers and rapids.

I began to look about and examine our outfit. We had no luxuries. Three pounds was the gross weight of food allowed each man on the bill of lading. It consisted of a little pemmican, tea, a bit of flour, tobacco; no luxuries. For dunnage, the middlemen were allowed fifteen pounds, the steersman twenty pounds. This food was supplied on the outgoing trip, at Fort Garry, Norway House, Cumberland House, and then at Portage la Loche. On the return trip at the same places. Two very important articles were a tool chest and a medicine chest. The medicine chest, equipped according to the formula of the Company's doctor in London, contained: two pounds of epsom salts (crystals), one dozen purgative powders, one dozen vomits (in little packets), one small spirits smelling salts, one half dozen bottles pain-killer (medium size), one or two rolls of sticking plaster, lancet, a pair of forceps. With these drugs was a book of instructions. But none of the men, not even the guide, could read them. However, they knew the doses of everything by heart. A guide never gave a man medicine to administer to himself. He was required to fetch his pannikin — a tin dish that held a pint — filled with river water, and



A 'Beaver' Treasury

William Cornwallis King (1845-1940) was born in India where his father was serving as a colonel of cavalry with the army of the East India Company. He was educated in England at the Blue Coat School (Christ's Hospital) and at Sandhurst. During his schooldays he met the sons of Hudson's Bay Company officers and their tales of adventure in Canada stirred his imagination. He abandoned plans to enter the Army and opted for the fur trade instead. By 1862 he was at Red River as an HBC clerk. He served the Company for 43 years in various locations, becoming a Commissioned Officer. He retired in 1903.

In his old age a number of his stories appeared in *The Beaver* "as told to" Mary Weekes. The story of his journey with the York boat brigade in 1863 appeared in *The Beaver* for December 1940, the month of his death.

the guide poured out what he estimated as a dose. This the patient had to drink under his observation. This was to prevent men from shamming sickness. There was very little deception practised however. When it came to extracting a tooth, the guide set his patient up against the side of the boat, got a firm grip on the tooth and hauled it out. A jackknife was all that was required for an amputation. Everything was managed very well.

I looked at the tool-chest box. Said a boatman, "This might mean life or death to us!" He was so earnest that I examined the contents carefully. There was a hammer, axe, handsaw, a bundle of assorted cut nails, brace-and-bit, gimlet, three assorted chisels, caulking irons, oakum, a pail of tar, a couple of yards of spare canvas, assorted thread (this was lift thread that came in little bundles and was sold by the pound), two sail needles, a half-dozen awls, some babiche — rawhide cut into thin strips for mending clothes and sails.

As I stood in the hot sun that morning so long ago and realized that every item we had aboard had been planned with attention to economy of space and weight and use, I was impressed.

I remember asking a boatman about the equipment of the boat itself. This included a large axe, three eight-gallon tin boat kettles, a two-quart bailing pan, extra sail and rigging, a pair of spare oars, a removable steering rudder, and a bundle of straps.

I asked Baptiste Bruce about the carrying straps. He said, "There are ten to the bundle. We use them on the portages. Each man is given one, and I, or another guide, put the names of the men on them. At the end of the trip these straps must be returned to me. Suppose a man lose his strap? Then he must buy another. And, how he will grumble if he has to buy a second strap out of his hard earned money! When a man pays for a thing, he is careful."

I felt surprised and pleased to hear that I had been assigned a personal servant, Noel, who was repacking his dunnage bag. I noticed that he had one three-point Hudson's Bay blanket, a pair of ten-ounce duck trousers and duck frock — this was a kind of shirt that hung loose over the trousers — a small towel, a cake of soap, a comb, a looking-glass and a couple of pairs of moccasins. These fellows certainly could travel light. Yet, what more did a man need?

We started at noon from Lower Fort Garry and drifted down the river — about twenty miles. During the night a strong fair wind arose which filled our sails and carried us along.

At 3 a.m., when we got out on Lake Winnipeg, the wind arose to a storm. To my surprise, Bruce headed out into the middle of the lake.

"*Towich*!" commanded Bruce. The crew came alive. The vigour of that command brought me to attention too. The men, dragging their starboard oars, swerved the boat and with long mighty strokes steered straight out to open water.

"What does *Towich* mean?" I asked. But though I stood immediately above the oarsman, my voice came faint through the hoarse wind. "Out into the open lake. It is Cree," he answered. Then he roared a curse of defiance, as an avalanche of water raked the boat from stem to stern. Without missing a stroke, the men got out of their wet jackets, and, with bare bodies, doubled to their oars.

Camp on a portage, nineteenth century.

A York boat, loaded and under sail.

A long hour passed. The wind ascended to a gale. Bruce moved to the steersman. Through the roar of wind and water, his orders came distinct. "The other boats," he commanded, "must not be allowed to catch up to us, or come nearer than two hundred yards. They must not pass us!" He watched to see that when he hoisted or slackened sail, the men in the other boats did likewise.

Now Bruce took the steersman's place. The wind had grown dangerous. Bruce's voice, iron-cool, reached every man. Still his orders were distinct, unhurried. He said: "Put the smoke-moose tarpaulins (coverings from fifteen to eighteen feet long and nine feet wide) over the boats. Nail them securely over the edges. Take all spare oars off the outside of the boats. Lash them right, lengthwise, down the middle of the cargo. Attend to the fastenings at bow and stern. All men to the pans and bail!"

I found myself with the men bailing, bailing, bailing. Heavens! how the water found, and lodged in, the hollows. Despite the great seamanship of the men, I feared we would be swamped. Now I understood the wisdom of Bruce's command, "*Towich*!" Out here on the open water, the waves were less treacherous than inshore. They were longer and heavier, more like sea-waves. Nearer shore, the back-wash would have swamped the boat.

It seems like yesterday that I was set in that stormy scene. The bitter oaths of the men punctuated the bellowing wind as the heavy combers struck the boat fore and aft, roared over the bow, drenched us to the skin. "Bail, bail!" Bruce's voice never ceased. The pitch-black night wore on. No man hesitated. Not one complained. Through the thumping seas, the men remained strong and steady in their rowing places. They were galley-slaves; Bruce their master. I sometimes wonder if there are men anywhere today — men of the breed of these Red River voyageurs!

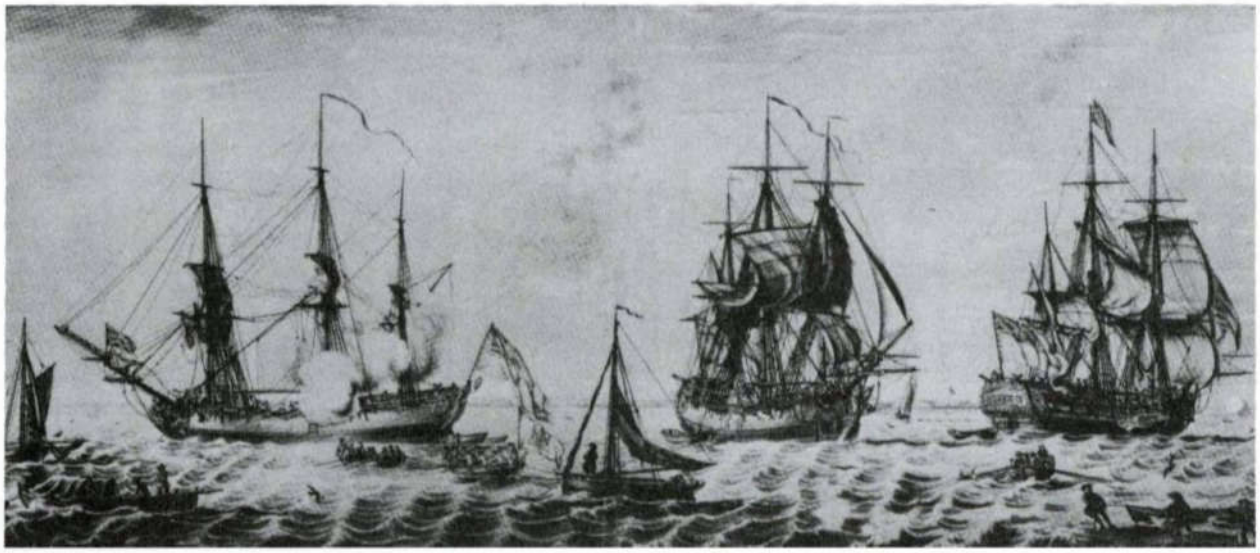
Out of the long nervous hours a grey dawn came. At the helm, Bruce was a Viking of old come to life, standing his boat to the open sea. The men broke into song. Great joyous, lusty song. They had forgotten their thirst, their fatigue. They were triumphant.

I had forgotten about my personal servant. We had little food or rest for three days. Our lives, the cargo, were in peril. From the mouth of the Red to Berens River, to Norway House, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, we never went ashore. This was the first lap of our journey to Mackenzie's river. The first-water brand of seamanship of the Red River boatmen is no legend. ◆

— *The Beaver,* December 1940.

Research and development is a valid, if not essential, part of the program of a modern corporation and it was a significant component of the early years of the Hudson's Bay Company. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was a close relationship between the members of the Board of Governors of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Royal Society of London, with some members serving on both boards. This association created an awareness that even a trading company with an interest in research could improve commerce and enhance the power of the country and Crown.

Although we know of the Hudson's Bay Company explorers, their adventures, their quest for precious metals and new trade, there is little written on the research done by the Company into almost all the other scientific disciplines of the day. The Company added a great deal to world knowledge in botany, zoology, meteorology, geography, astronomy, physics and chemistry. To perform all this research in isolated posts they needed men for all sciences. One of the men to achieve success was Thomas Hutchins, surgeon.



HBC Archives

"King George", "Seahorse" and "Prince Rupert" at Gravesend, England, 1769. These HBC ships sailed to York Factory in Hutchins' day.

It is not known if the governors of the Company had a job description for the position of surgeon. Their personal involvement with the Royal Society of London probably affected their selections. The advanced British medical schools in the eighteenth century were in Scotland where botany, materia medica, zoology, comparative anatomy, human anatomy and some chemistry and physics were taught. These university graduates comprised only a minority of the medical practitioners in Britain at this time. Apprentices and their masters carried out most of the medical practice and it is from this group that the Hudson's Bay Company probably obtained most of its surgeons. Long apprenticeship of up to ten years probably included most of the university disciplines and resulted in the surgeon being the most qualified to carry out scientific research for the Company. Since the surgeon would be an executive officer, he would be expected to be a gentleman and, of course, capable of reading and writing. It was hoped that he would be ambitious and learn the fur trade in order to advance the Company's commercial interests. It would be anticipated that he would be curious in all the scientific disciplines. Finally, he should be capable of satisfying the medical demands of the 60 to 70 Europeans at York Factory and provide the medical needs for the Indians who came to trade, as well as the Indians who had settled around the fort. We know that the Company employees on the Bay were convinced of the value of a surgeon-in-residence. James Isham, an efficient Chief at York Factory, wrote in the journal in 1754, two days after the death of his surgeon, that he was immediately dispatching a packet to Churchill to return with their surgeon. In fact, throughout the eighteenth century, the London Committee maintained a surgeon as one of the three officers at York Factory. With contracts of two to five years, almost twenty-five surgeons served at this fort. The Company constantly reminded these surgeons that they were responsible for not only the health of all the servants of the Company but also the health of their trading customers. Unlike other invaders of the Americas, the Hudson's Bay Company realized from the earliest days that healthy

customers, particularly those at peace with one another, made for the most profits.

Thomas Hutchins was probably in his thirties when he signed on as a ship's surgeon on the annual supply ship to York Factory in 1765. His father is listed as a Joseph Hutchins, yeoman, from Thames Street, London. In 1727 his son, Thomas, was apprenticed to a Sarah Holloway, surgeon, for seven years for a fee of £10 a year. Upon the return of the supply ship in 1766 there must have been mutual satisfaction with his performance on board for it is recorded in the London Committee book that he was "entertained as a surgeon at £35 annually for five years" and was stationed at York Factory.

York Factory was a trading post in a hostile land with the constant threat of attack by enemies, mutiny, disease, famine, fire and the weather. As well, the storage and trade in alcohol and gun powder added to the problems. In some respects the daily routine at York Factory was similar to that maintained on board an eighteenth century ship with the daily journal outlining weather conditions, work duties for the day, sick parade, even food rations and punishments being recorded. Discipline was tightly enforced in a matter befitting that on any ship with the Chief being able to punish in almost any manner, except by death. Limiting food, deducting pay or imposing fines were common forms of punishment with physical violence being frequently used. On occasion the employees would receive the cat-o-nine tails, and, of course, they could always be sent back on the annual supply ship when, and if, it arrived each year.

In 1766 Ferdinand Jacobs, the new chief at York Factory, returned from London with his new surgeon officer, Thomas Hutchins, on the same ship. Jacobs maintained discipline by the occasional cuffing of his men or, as he states in the journal "the twisting of noses". However, his surgeon appears to have been of the gentler type and maintained discipline by gaining respect for his medical achievements. In February of 1771 the factor wrote "Doctor fully employed. Never less than three or four patients at one time". In March of 1771 the journal records that the surgeon worked "night as well as day". During Hutchins' tenure at York Factory there were twelve deaths amongst the natives but unfortunately little information is available in the HBC Archives concerning these mortalities since the surgeon's diaries have not been preserved. At the same time we have some details of the European deaths as the factor had to account for working time lost by his men due to illness. There were nine deaths amongst the Europeans, six from drowning, one from "old age" and two from tuberculosis. Surgical problems included a dislocated shoulder, fractured arm, amputations and abscess drainage. Medical illnesses included the treatment of tertiary syphilis, pleurisy, pneumonia, tuberculosis, rheumatism, scurvy, frozen limbs, diarrhea, gout and mild epidemics of various types.

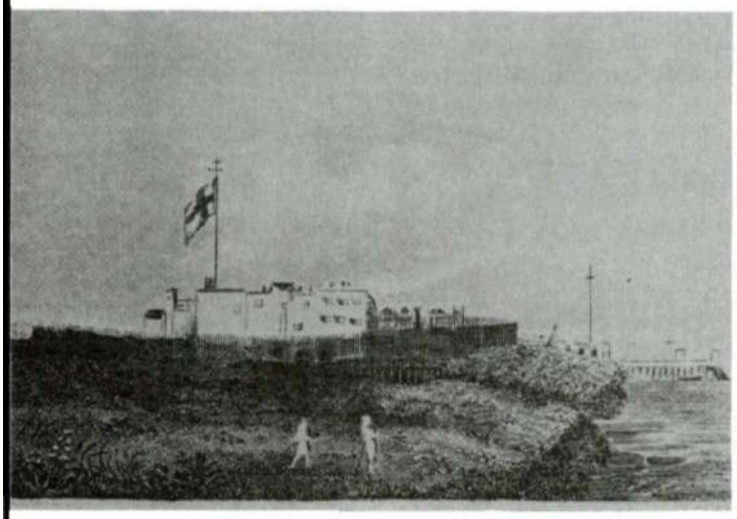
Fellow officers in the other forts on the Bay must have appreciated Hutchins' health care. In 1773 when he had been promoted to chief at Albany on James Bay, he received many letters from other officers on the Bay describing their own illnesses and searching for advice. He was invariably careful in replying. When Humphrey

Thomas Hutchins and the HBC

A SURGEON ON THE BAY

By W.B. Ewart

Martin, a later chief at York Factory, gave symptoms of depression to him in a letter, Hutchins replied "Use exercise dear sir, nothing better", and when Eusebius Kitchen, the chief and surgeon at Moose Factory, was using antimony and mercury for his multiple complaints, Hutchins replied to him that he had consulted with his associate, Edward Jarvis (surgeon) and that the use of bark and French brandy would be more appropriate. His knowledge of the modern medicine of the day is exemplified by his advice to the Hudson's Bay Company officer from Quebec, Germaine Maugenest, on 23 May 1782 regarding the treatment of scurvy: "but vegetable is the truest remedy when they can be had,



HBC Archives

York Factory at the end of the eighteenth century.

sorrel, dandelion, fat hen, nettles, scurvy grass, watercress are all excellent and many grow wild in this country, liquor of the birch tree obtained by tapping it is a very good remedy and there can be no fear of the scurvy affecting your people until the spring of the year as fish and vegetables and berries in particular are to be had all summer and autumn." This advice placed Hutchins' knowledge of scurvy well ahead of that of a large number of naval surgeons aboard His Majesty's ships at that time.

On Christmas Eve 1777 Hutchins treated John Daniel for an abscess on his right hand: "I opened the hand which was swelled and greatly inflamed. I dressed the cut with yellow basil. I rubbed the part that was most swollen with green ointment and put a poultice made of green ointment with a little oil and vinegar over the hole and dressed it again at night in the same manner and found it more swelled and thick at two or three places and let out matter, dressed it again." Daniel survived. One of the most common forms of therapy accepted by patients and physicians in the eighteenth century was therapeutic phlebotomy (bleeding). This was even carried out on a regular basis as a preventative form of therapy in England at that time. In September 1775, the busiest time of the year, Hutchins wrote from Albany, "was sick for a few days which made my life despaired. Mr. Jarvis bled me 3 days. I could not eat drink nor speak and gave my orders by writing."

As to his personal life on the Bay we know very little. Account books of this period were examined and there were no purchases of tobacco and only five gallons of brandy were obtained during 1766 and 1771. In his letter of advice to a new factor in 1781 he wrote "Be careful of your morals so that you will be a good example of those under you. Encourage virtue, diligence and sobriety. I write this at night while others sleep. Take the hint and be mindful of your duties." But it was not for his success as a factor or for his achievements in medicine that Hutchins was honoured in his day. Rather it was for his work as a scientist.

In a letter directed to York Factory from London in 1735 the London Committee stated "We must repeat our formal order that you have in proper season some of the seeds, berries cones or kernals have all growing in your country and send them to us. Also tell your surgeon to give us particular description thereof and the names and qualities of what use the natives put them to and send this account in writing of the particulars of which you put on board at that time. This order we require may not be neglected for the future." This was a very forceful order judging by the usual way that directions came from the London Committee to the factors. During his time at York Factory, despite the busy medical practice, Hutchins worked with Andrew Graham in collecting, identifying and forwarding botanical and zoological specimens. There has been some controversy in the past over who should have received credit for the observations and descriptions but there is no doubt that both of them were involved. The collaboration resulted in the collection of descriptions of sixteen species of birds, fourteen species of fish and seven species of animal from the Hudson's Bay shore area.

When Hutchins returned to London from York Factory in 1773 he brought with him a few samples of seeds, plants, cones, birds, seafish and quadrupeds and stated that he would continue to collect fish, insects and plants that might prove acceptable. He continued to collect specimens when he was transferred to Albany as well as carrying out some other scientific endeavours.

It is not surprising that Charles Darwin emerged two generations later when one looks at the efforts of the Hudson's Bay Company and other British enterprises throughout the world in collecting biological material.

In the Hudson's Bay archival records there is a paper by Hutchins entitled "Observations on the Effect of Cold Remedies." In this article he describes the pathology of frozen human tissue and he questions the value

of cold immersion of frozen extremities as a means of treatment. He describes ice crystals in the air and the possibility that these "frigid spicules" striking against the skin might act like "blistering plaster when applied to the skin." And he explains that when the wind blows hard the ice spicules penetrate deeper. It is a very interesting explanation of wind chill.

Other scientific achievements included accurate recordings of measurements made with the Dipping Needle (a type of magnetic compass) which had been of interest to the Royal Society since 1679. He also maintained a meteorological journal which contained not only multiple daily temperature measurements but associated weather observations. He also made some of the earliest records of bird migrations.

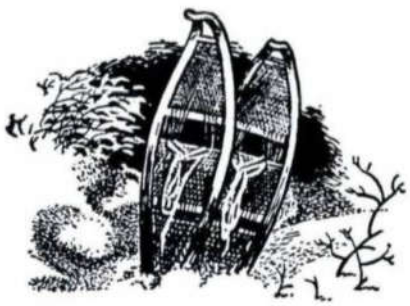
On the 3 June 1769 the planet Venus passed in front of the sun. This had been forecast by the Royal Society and with the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company an astronomer had been sent across the ocean to give the directions to Hutchins and Andrew Graham for observing and recording the event. Hutchins was later supplied by the Company with a Handley quadrant and a telescope while at Fort Albany where he recorded the eclipse of the sun on 22 October 1780 "with utmost care." All this information was eventually sent to the Royal Society in London.

In December 1783 Thomas Hutchins was awarded the Copley Medal and at the same time was also given honourable membership in the Royal Society in Edinburgh. The Copley Medal was equivalent to the Nobel Prize of today and was awarded annually by the Royal Society in London. The medal remains as a coveted prize in physics at the annual awards ceremony. Hutchins gained this world-wide recognition for his work in Rupert's Land determining the freezing point of mercury (-40° C). The paper that he gave in 1783 to the Royal Society can be read in the Philosophical Transactions. The paper begins with this foreword: "If these experiments should be agreeable to the Royal Society then merit must be attributed to the excellent instructions they transmitted to me which left me nothing to do but to follow them. Yet I cannot avoid doing justice to the ingenious Dr. Black, Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh Medical School who favoured me with some remarks on an experiment I made in 1775 to freeze quicksilver and first suggested that this method of ascertaining the point of congelation, which I have the honour of communicating to the Royal Society by means of Samuel Wegg Esq. the Governor of Hudson's Bay Company whose attention to provide the use of the Society can only be equalled by that liberality of sentiment and great goodness of heart that makes him encourage even the most feeble attempts." Hutchins' paper with the foreword and subsequent discussions occupy 250 pages of the Philosophical Transactions, with comments by numerous members of the Royal Society. Interest in the subject was world-wide at the time. Work was being done by a research team in Russia as well as by scientists in Sweden. The National Research Council of Canada would probably be interested in Hutchins' laboratory. "This experiment was made in the open air on top of the fort with only a few deerskins sewed together and placed to the windward for a better shelter. There is plenty of snow (18 inches deep upon the woods) and the thermometer was close at hand." This research entailed multiple night time measurements.

It is of interest that the next presentation in the Philosophical Transactions of that year was made by Joseph Priestley and concerned the conversion of water into air.

After his return to London in 1783 Hutchins was employed as recording secretary for the Hudson's Bay Company for some years and at the same time remained active in scientific affairs of the day, in particular those of a biological nature. When he died in London in 1790 Andrew Graham, his collaborator and fellow naturalist at York Factory, paid tribute to "this worthy gentleman". Today his only recognition is the name for the Hutchins' goose. There should be more credit given to both the Hudson's Bay Company and to Thomas Hutchins for their scientific contributions. There is no doubt that this energetic, curious eighteenth-century surgeon was a man for all sciences, but there is also no doubt that the Hudson's Bay Company encouraged him in advancing scientific knowledge. ◆

The late W.B. Ewart, a Winnipeg physician, became interested in history through contact with the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. His article on mortality at York Factory was published in the "Canadian Medical Association Journal" in 1983. Dr. Ewart's article on Hutchins was originally presented to a Rupert's Land Research Centre Colloquium.



Tourists In Old Montreal

By Clarence Epstein

Contemporary guide-books to Montreal offer ethnic, alternative or even "ultimate" experiences to a city which attracts over five million visitors annually. Most editions outline specific places of architectural interest such as St. Joseph's Oratory, the Olympic Stadium or suggest walks to the top of Mount Royal where the historical and the monumental can be admired from a bird's eye view. One-hundred and fifty years ago sight-seers (or site-seers) were equally impressed by Montreal's built environment.

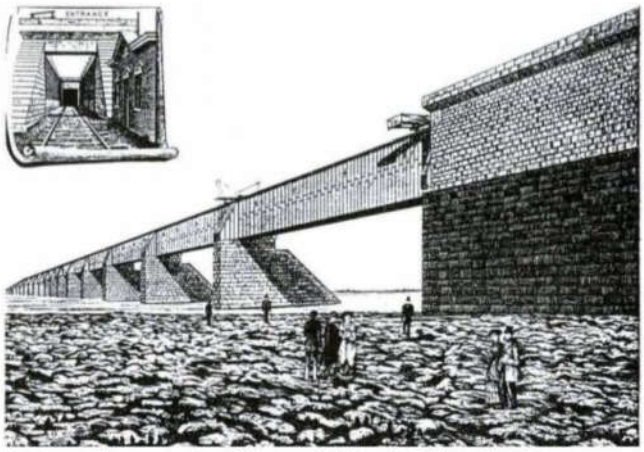
They might have purchased *The Stranger's Guide to Montreal* (1848). Almost incidental to the numerous hotel and jewellery advertisements, visitors were provided with a map, interesting facts and figures as well as woodcut illustrations proudly depicting the city's major buildings. Readers were recommended to stay at the hotels Donagana, Clifton or Ottawa. Hotel operators who profited from the joint promotion of their lodgings and city, distributed handbooks with basic information on the variety of charming buildings which formed a *tout ensemble* unequalled in any city on the continent. Montreal became a prime destination on the Grand Tour of North America along with Niagara Falls and Saratoga Springs. Despite its grandiose descriptions of the city, the *Traveller's Guide to Montreal and its Vicinity* (1857) provided no illustrations of the island, instead only a prominent one of the sponsoring hotel. Tourism was big business.

According to calculations referred to in *The New Guide to Montreal and Its Environs* (1851), the city was situated on the same latitude as Lyons and Venice in Europe and nearly the same longitude as New York. It was called the "Garden of Canada" due to its luxuriant production of the choicest fruits and vegetables. Within thirty years, travel books were confident enough to claim that Sherbrooke Street was scarcely outdone by Fifth Avenue in the magnificence of its buildings and that Ste. Catherine Street had become the "Broadway of Montreal".

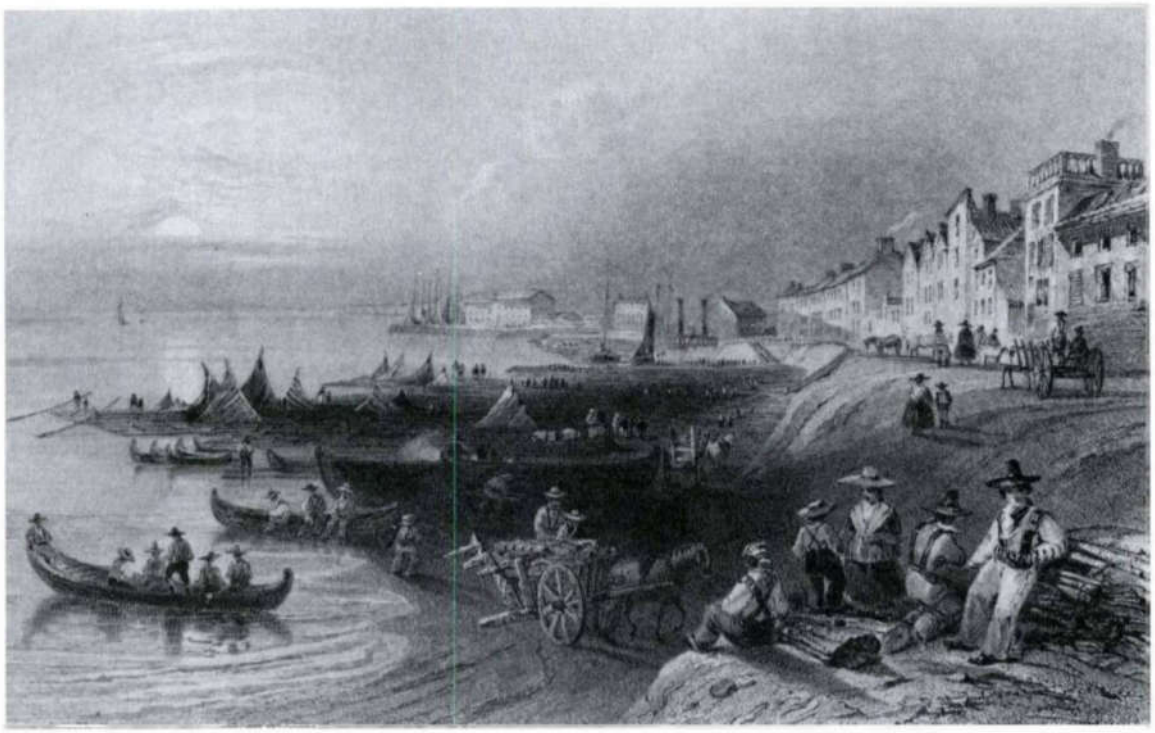
Some guides were quick to place the area on the highest of pedestals. In John McConniff's *Illustrated Montreal* (1890) it was noted that the distinctive location of the city was not surpassed by any in the world, not even by Constantinople. *St. Lawrence Hall Montreal City Guide* (1885) deemed the winter equipage of Montreal to be so attractive that only St. Petersburg could claim precedence over it. In fact, out-of-towners marvelled at the variety of religious costumes on display during their promenades of the old section.

Impressive to all were the myriad churches dotting the city, not to mention the street directory which read like the Calendar of Saints. There was no place in North America which had a greater number of ecclesiastical institutions. For more than 80 years the only synagogue in Canada was located in Montreal. Except for the Cathedral of Mexico, Notre-Dame Basilica was the largest church of its kind on the continent, visible to the naked eye from miles around. Housing one of the world's heaviest bells, Notre-Dame in its neo-gothic splendour competed for prominence in Place d'Armes with the Ionic colonnade of the CPR offices and the Corinthian portico of the Bank of Montreal.

The city was drawing more and more visitors thanks to its strengths in shipping and finance. At one point, behind the Banks of England and of France, the Bank of Montreal maintained the highest international rating. Areas resided in by commercial magnates such as those between Beaver Hall Hill and the foot of Mount Royal were considered the most affluent in the world. Stately homes were featured in some guides. The *Guide to Montreal* (1874) noted the fascinating mixture of building types to be found in quarters like St. Lawrence Main Street, where every passer-by could compare the



A nineteenth-century view of Montreal's Victoria Bridge, "the longest bridge in the world".



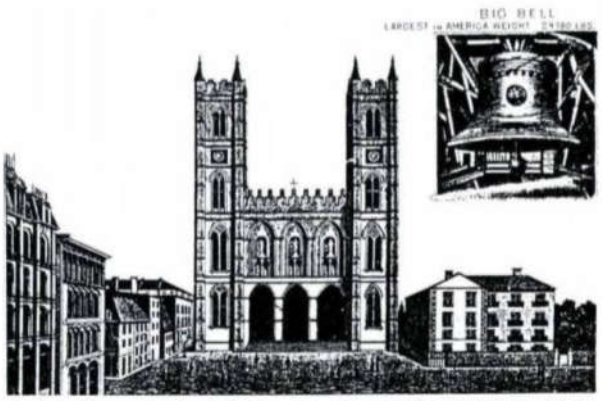
Montreal from the river, early nineteenth century, a romantic view by W.H. Bartlett.

old French one-storey houses with their *coupe feu* walls to the modern brick and cut-stone structures.

By the late nineteenth century the American tourist trade was booming. Montreal was an important transportation hub thereby prompting railway barons to invest in guide-book production. In their handbook to Montreal, the Delaware & Hudson Railroad Company quoted a distinguished professor, who, writing in *The Scottish Review* in 1892, declared that there was no railway journey in the world which in one day could offer a traveller such variety of splendour and landscape as the morning express between Montreal and New York.

These two cities vied for the European market as well. Montreal was the largest inland seaport in the world and Britons were advised that the voyage from Liverpool was 315 miles shorter than to New York. During their stay in the Canadian city they might marvel at the Hôtel Dieu, the largest building in the Dominion; the Sun Life Building, the tallest building in the Empire; or the Victoria Bridge, the longest bridge in the world.

Fares for coaches, cabs and caleches were appended to some editions as were recommended drives to the countryside. Throughout the period, updated editions included numerous advertisements, yet the compactness of these dated guide-books was one feature which modern-day versions appear to have disregarded. Considering the cumbersome baggage and heavy dress



At Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal tourists could see "the largest bell in North America".

of most Victorian travellers, they were partial to pocket-size editions when sight-seeing. Today, visitors to Montreal can retrace the steps of their nineteenth-century counterparts but might have problems squeezing the bulkier contemporary guides into their bum-bags. ◆

Clarence Epstein is an architectural historian researching the development of Montreal churches. He is undertaking a Ph.D. and lecturing at the University of Edinburgh.

A Stimulating Revision

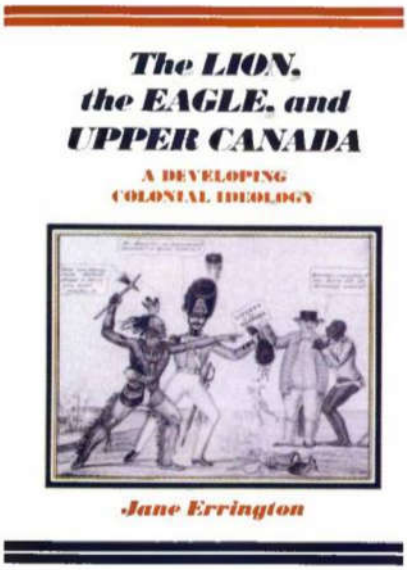
By Robert Saunders

THE LION, THE EAGLE, AND UPPER CANADA
A Developing Colonial Ideology

By Jane Errington. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1994. 272 pp., illus. $18.95.

Philip Guedalla is credited with the remark that history repeats itself but historians repeat each other. Guedalla could never resist a clever epigram but, in this instance, there was a good deal of truth in what he said. It is certainly not unknown for a historian to misinterpret or misunderstand the evidence concerning some past event, and then for this false surmise to become enshrined in textbooks as the unassailable truth. This is why "revisionist" history can be so valuable and stimulating. It forces us to think again about the history we thought we knew.

In *The Lion, The Eagle, and Upper Canada* Jane Errington has challenged the accepted version of Upper Canadian history from 1783 when the American Revolutionary War ended, to 1828 when the arrival of Sir John Colborne as the colony's lieutenant-governor was supposed to usher in a new era. (It did not). The conventional view of this period is familiar. The United Empire Loyalists, it is said, poured across the border into Canada filled with hatred of the United States and its chaotic, radical ways. Reinforced by the War of 1812, this sentiment left such a distinct conservative and pro-British stamp on the colony that nothing that happened later could wholly remove it. Chester Martin gave memorable expression to this view when he wrote: "In the loyalist migration at the close of the [American] Revolution, the United States had sown the neighbouring provinces with dragon's teeth, and every reformer from Gourlay to Baldwin reaped an ineradicable harvest of prejudice and suspicion." (*Canadian Historical Review*, 1937, vol. 3.)



This is true only up to a point. The United Empire Loyalists were refugees and, particularly in this past half-century, we know all too well the bitterness and the tragedy implied in that word. It should be remembered, however, that the intensity of the suffering varied a great deal among families, and also that bitterness, perhaps fortunately, tends to lessen with the passing years. The difficulty with Chester Martin's metaphor of the dragon's teeth is that it assumes an unwavering attitude of "prejudice and suspicion" maintained over more than forty years. The truth is more complex. As Errington demonstrates, opinion in Upper Canada about the United States — and about Great Britain as well — was never rigid and static but, on the contrary, was in a constant state of flux.

In the years immediately following the American Revolution, Upper Canadians tried to establish a pattern of order and stability in the new colony which, so they believed, reflected conditions in Great Britain. At the same time, however, they remained conscious of their American roots and kept up contacts, through visits and correspondence, with their former colleagues and friends in the United States. Errington draws attention, for instance, to the flow of letters between the educated, literate elite in Upper Canada and the moderate Federalists in the United States who were apprehensive of the more radical elements in the republic. Upper Canadians, in other words, revelled in their British connections but, just as emphatically, they saw themselves as part of the conservative community within North America. Almost from its first beginnings, Upper Canada drew its political and cultural inspiration from two distinct sources.

With the arrival of John Graves Simcoe as the colony's first

lieutenant-governor in 1792, a strengthening of pro-British feeling might have been expected, but this is not what happened. The trouble with Simcoe was that he was too zealous. He wanted to create a replica of England in Upper Canada, complete with English institutions, English social customs and even English hereditary titles. He had energy and imagination to burn but he had only a slender grasp of what was practical. As well, he was utterly insensitive to the feelings of the colonists themselves.

Richard Cartwright, an influential Kingston merchant, may be taken as representative of those in Upper Canada who opposed Simcoe's anglophile policies. Born in Albany, New York, in 1759, he was expelled from New York in 1777 as a result of his loyalist views. After serving with Butler's Rangers for three years, he set up as a merchant in Niagara. By 1785 he had moved to Kingston and he remained a prominent figure in the political and business life of Upper Canada until his death in 1815. His grandson, Sir Richard Cartwright, achieved his own niche in history as a prominent Liberal politician in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In their article on Cartwright in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (vol. 4), George Rawlyk and Janice Porter discuss in some detail Cartwright's frequent clashes with Simcoe. Cartwright agreed with Simcoe that colonial institutions should be modelled on those of the mother country but he believed that the stress should be on what he called "the spirit of the constitution" and not "on copying all the subordinate establishments without considering the great disparity of the two countries in every respect". He complained that Simcoe "thinks every existing regulation in England would be proper here".

Thus, for instance, although he was himself an Anglican, Cartwright opposed the exclusive privileges given to the Anglican clergy in the Marriage Act of 1793 on the ground that there was inadequate provision for the marriage of Dissenters who comprised a majority of the population in Upper Canada. Similarly, he opposed the Judicature Act of 1794 which centralized the courts in the colony. He argued that the scattered population of Upper Canada, along with the shortage of lawyers, made such centralization impractical.

His frequent quarrels with Simcoe did nothing to shake Cartwright loose from his conservative convictions. Indeed, these seem to have grown stronger with the passing years. Another of his differences with Simcoe was over the lieutenant-governor's policy of encouraging Americans to cross the border and settle in Upper Canada. Cartwright conceded that these immigrants were capable and resourceful farmers but he felt that they lacked "the spirit of subordination" and that their "affectation of equality" threatened the stability of the colony.

This anti-American feeling became more general as tension mounted between Canada and the United States and when war finally broke out in 1812 there was an upsurge of patriotic feeling in Upper Canada. Great Britain was now clearly the colony's champion and the Yankees were the enemy. All the same, it would be wrong to stress too much the hostility to the United States created by the war. As Errington observes: "As Upper Canadians mounted a defence of their homes in 1812, they did so as much in terms of their American as of their British heritage."

In any event, the coming of peace in 1815 brought an end to any unity of opinion. The generation that followed Richard Cartwright's was sharply divided over the direction the colony should take. On one side were the Tories; on the other were the Reformers. (Errington spells both nouns without capital letters.) The Tories — men such as John Strachan and John Beverley Robinson — hewed to what they conceived to be the *spirit* of the British constitution. In practice, this meant that the real power in the colony should reside principally in the executive council and the appointed legislative council. The Reformers, on the other hand, were convinced that the colony should be a *mirror image* of the British constitution and that, therefore, the elected House of Assembly should be supreme.

These opposing views affected how each side regarded the United States. The Tories, naturally enough, feared and abhorred the levelling "democratic" tendencies in the United States. The Reformers, however, were convinced that a government based on a popularly-elected Assembly need not fear absorption by the United States and so were quite willing to strengthen social and economic ties with the republic. In this regard, the Reformers were closer in sentiment to the original United Empire Loyalists.

This summary is, of necessity, too brief to do justice to the subtlety and depth of Errington's thesis. Her

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book was first published in 1987 as an expansion of a doctoral dissertation. It was warmly praised in academic circles and won for Errington the CHA/AHA Albert B. Corey Prize. Now that it has been brought out in a paperback edition, it is to be hoped it will gain the wider audience it deserves. Errington, who teaches history at the Royal Military College in Kingston, writes clear, vigorous prose and her text is enlivened by a selection from the uninhibited and irreverent political cartoons of the period. There is a comprehensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources as well as full notes. In these notes, incidentally, Errington takes the occasional scholarly and courteous jab at other historians who hold more conventional views.

When the book first appeared, at least one reviewer questioned whether Richard Cartwright and those of his way of thinking really represented the general feeling in Upper Canada. Were not the opinions cited by Errington to support her argument only those of a small, elite group? It is a question that must trouble the historian of opinion in any era where documents are not plentiful and Errington tackles it with forthright candour. She writes:

> In the case of early Upper Canada our knowledge of the everyday lives and activities of the majority of the pioneers is still sadly incomplete. Only an extensive study of popular culture in all its aspects ... will provide us with some appreciation of their attitudes and beliefs. Almost no attempt has been made here to grapple with this very large and complex problem. ... This [book] is ... a study of the articulate elite. ... It is likely that the views chronicled here did at times reflect those of many Upper Canadians, perhaps a large majority. At other times, and perhaps most of the time, however, the views of the elite mirrored their own self-centred concerns, nothing more and nothing less.

Errington does not attempt to deduce any lessons for today from her study. She is, after all, an historian and not a polemicist. Nevertheless, if only by implication, she poses questions that still trouble us. In her final paragraph she writes:

"Underlying the political controversy of the 1820s and, indeed, since Simcoe had first arrived in Upper Canada, was the colony's attempt to find a unique and special identity. The United States and Great Britain provided the colonists with constant points of reference in their search. On the basis of their understanding of these two nations ... Upper Canadians sought to discover who and what they were".

The search continues.

Robert Saunders is a regular contributor to the book pages of "The Beaver".

THE BEST OF BOB

By Laird Rankin

TODAY IN HISTORY

By Bob Johnstone. Warwick Publishing Inc., Toronto and Los Angeles, 1995. 366 pp., illus. $18.95.

Every day — perhaps faithfully in some cases — countless Canadians tune in their local CBC radio station and listen to Bob Johnstone, a former crime reporter turned storyteller, and his daily history broadcast — a short, snappy vignette where some famous, infamous or obscure aspect of world history gets three minutes of air time and whatever spin-offs that might follow. One of the spin-offs in Johnstone's case has been the recent recycling of 365 of his "best" broadcasts into a book, one story a day with the story coinciding with its anniversary date. With over 4,000 broadcasts to his credit, culling mere hundreds from many thousands must have been an awesome task. Maybe it was this formidable selection process that delayed the production of this book. The publication seems so long overdue; it is such an obvious byproduct of his popular series, one of the longest-running in CBC broadcasting history, now in its thirteenth year.

This hard-copy version of what was previously heard (and now perhaps forgotten) serves as a handy reference tool, a tangible reminder of things past. A harbinger of more books to come? Simultaneously too, this book can only advance Johnstone's considerable work in popularizing history, that of bringing it to life and giving it a personality rather than simply a bland recitation of facts and figures.

It is debatable whether or not this book does indeed feature the "best" of Bob. Does it really matter? What is more important are the best things about this book — its wide range of stories and the way they are told. The variety in the book is limited only by the days of the year. The book is truly Canadian for it has a multicultural content. There is a little about us. Did you know, for instance, that the Alberta government's decision of 10 April 1952 to introduce a modest water fluoridation program outraged the public? The people were convinced it was a Communist plot. There are some American and European stories as well, and some from farther

afield. Whether your tastes run to sports, Hollywood, events or inventions, the famous or the phoney, battles or boondoggles — Johnstone delivers.

A Johnstone broadcast is known for its clarity, punch and pleasing, straightforward style. Johnstone would never say "policeman" when "cop" would do. While not every Johnstone subject is rivetting — and the same holds true for some in the book — Bob never loses marks for his manner. It is like listening to a friend.

The book itself, however, is not as user-friendly as its contents. Johnstone's broadcasts came in a uniform length. It was therefore efficient to design the book to accommodate one story per page for each day of the year. The result though is a thick, oversized volume, that is both cumbersome yet tolerable — you are only meant to read an item a day anyway. Even if, at one sitting, you sneak a peak at what is coming, or revisit yesterday, Johnstone's stories are the major draw. The design is not a major drawback. ◆

Laird Rankin is General Manager of Canada's National History Society.

Books Received

Urban Policing in Canada: Anatomy of an Aging Craft. By Maurice A. Martin. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1995. 240 pp. $49.94 hardcover; $18.95 paper.

Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario, 1791-1951. By A.B. McKillop. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994. 716 pp. $75.00 hardcover; $35.00 paper.

Catalysts and Watchdogs: B.C.'s Men of God, 1836-1871. By Joan Weir. Sono Nis Press, Victoria, 1995. 116 pp., illus. $14.95.

Flying Canucks: Famous Canadian Aviators. By Peter Pigott. Hounslow Press, Toronto, 1994. 200 pp., illus. $19.99.

Ottawa Insider

By J.E. Rea

OTTAWA AT WAR
The Grant Dexter Memoranda, 1939-1945

Edited and introduced by Frederick W. Gibson and Barbara Robertson. The Manitoba Record Society, Winnipeg, 1994. 515 pp., illus. $30.00.

This excellent book recalls a time when major Canadian newspapers were run by editors rather than accountants, and wire services had not yet replaced journalists. Grant Dexter was the "Man in Ottawa" for the *Winnipeg Free Press* during the Second World War. Supplementing his published reports were long, gossipy, private letters written to his editors back in Winnipeg, J.W. Dafoe and George Ferguson. Dafoe was Canada's most respected editor and the *Free Press* the most powerful Liberal organ in the West, if not in the country. Dexter's letters make it dramatically clear that the certainty with which historians describe events in Ottawa during those years scarcely reflects the confusion in which wartime decisions were taken.

After the fall of France in 1940, Canada was suddenly in the alarming position of being Britain's principal ally. No longer could we limit our contribution to one division overseas, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and food and material aid. It was now "Canada's War", in Jack Granatstein's apt phrase, and the government had to deal with questions certain to tax the physical and emotional strength of the nation. Dexter's letters reveal the apprehension, uncertainty and brooding sense of political danger that enshrouded the deliberations of the cabinet and, especially, the Cabinet War Committee. Matters affecting the CBC and the Press Censor now provoked tension as great as Munitions Minister C.D. Howe's unceasing demands for more men in his factories. It was all grist for Dexter's mill and frequently his observations formed the basis of subsequent Dafoe editorials.

The two most important and persistent issues were financing the war effort and providing sufficient manpower for the military. The former is less glamorous, more complex and thus less well known. But Dexter follows carefully the generally successful attempt to marshall the nation's wealth, to try and ensure some rough equity of burdens and, through the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, to do it all without grossly distorting the economy. But it is the manpower question which dominates the correspondence — manpower for factory, field and battle fronts in the air, at sea and in Europe. At its heart was the issue of compulsory military service — conscription — the poisoned chalice of Canadian politics that Prime Minister Mackenzie King so desperately wished to avoid.

Grant Dexter's letters will not change the usual interpretation of Canada's war effort; but they splendidly illuminate the contemporary professions of politics and journalism. For six years King and his colleagues faced the daily grind of vital decisions amid confusion, doubt, conflicting ambitions and political challenge. On balance this wartime cabinet was probably the strongest the country has ever enjoyed. Yet not one senior cabinet minister, except Lapointe who died early in the war, escaped King's suspicion

and censure. The constantly shifting patterns within his circle of official advisors were like an inconclusive and unending political ballet, with King, in his own mind, as the dying swan. There was no one in Ottawa better placed than Dexter to observe and reflect on this fascinating show.

We now receive our political news on television, often highlighted by the chaotic scrums of reporters and politicians in the halls of the centre block. Lacking depth and background, we form our judgements from well-scripted smiles, evasions and practised outrage. Dexter, on the other hand, knew all the major figures in Ottawa, some intimately. He lunched and dined with them and spent many evenings in conversation with them. There was little that went on, even in cabinet War Committee, of which Dexter was not soon made aware. The capital was a much different place then. It was smaller and more tightly knit. Due partly to the Liberal's long tenure in office, the close and effective bond between government and the senior mandarins, and Dexter's easy relationship with both, he had access to almost all the wielders of power, including the prime minister.

His role was two-fold; to report, often in meaty background articles, on national politics and, through these memoranda as he called them, to keep the editorial office in Winnipeg abreast of what was taking place. His most important contact, in terms of information, was Tom Crerar, Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, senior Privy Councillor and deputy chairman of the War Committee of cabinet. It was even more significant that Crerar was a very close friend and confidant of Dafoe. In addition, the erstwhile employer of Dafoe and Dexter, Victor Sifton, was also in Ottawa, serving as Master General of Ordnance in Defence Headquarters. The Winnipeg connection flourished. The network could also work in other ways. Whenever King wished to float an idea outside government or seek Dafoe's advice, Dexter, often through Crerar, was the means of communication.

In a graceful and useful Foreword, Barry Ferguson of the University of Manitoba sets Dexter in journalistic context. The intimacy which Dexter and a very few of his colleagues such as Blair Fraser enjoyed with Canada's political leaders brought with it a clear responsibility. They saw themselves and were accepted as "critic-advisors" and thus limited in their freedom to exploit their privileged information. The Manitoba Record Society, through the publication of Grant Dexter's letters, has vastly enriched the Canadian tapestry of the Second World War. ◆

J.E. Rea is Professor of History, University College, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

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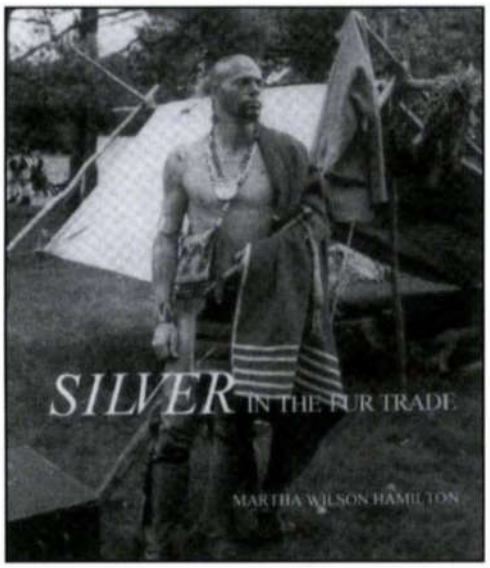

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THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

The Case of the Missing Beaver

I have just received the February/March issue of *The Beaver* with the re-run article by Marius Barbeau about beaver art.

Not having seen the subsequent issues in 1941, I do not know whether anyone at that time brought to his or the editor's attention that there was a very important piece of beaver art missing.

In February 1851, Sandford Fleming wrote in his diary: "*Breakfasted at Ellam Hotel* [Toronto] *with Mr. Rutter and Honble Jas. Morris Post-Master General — designing postage stamp for him*".

During the conversation that morning, Morris requested Fleming to draw a design for Canada's first adhesive postage stamp. It should show a beaver hard at work, symbolizing the hard work required to develop a new country and stimulating the barter of goods for furs, using the beaver skin.

Fleming went back to his draughting-surveyor's office on the second floor at 110-112 Yonge Street and went to work. His artwork was accepted and sent to New York to a security-printing firm (Rawdon, Wright, Hatch and Edson) which made an engraving of Fleming's art, printed it on laid paper and produced the first sheets of Canada's first postage stamp, the renowned "Three Penny Beaver". It was supplied imperforate to major Post Offices in Canada in mid-1851 (perforating was not invented until 1855). This first issue stamp on laid paper is now a rarity for philatelic enthusiasts.

Subsequently in 1852 it was printed on wove paper, still imperforate. Then in 1859, the plate was reworked to make it into the 5¢ beaver (with the change from sterling to dollar currency) — still with Fleming's beaver design. The printed sheets were perforated and the stamps used for regular postage until 1868.

In 1951, on the centennial of the first issue, the original 3d beaver design was reproduced in miniature as a stamp-on-stamp, the 15¢ denomination of a 4-stamp set.

In addition to Fleming's art, Emanuel Hahn, R.C.A., S.S.C., engraved another 5¢ beaver for the Post Office in 1954 as part of our Canadian Wild Life series, 1953-55.

Related is the Fur Resources postage stamp of 1950 showing an Indian — as we called them then — woman hanging up beaver skins to dry.

I have been an avid stamp collector for over 60 years and have accumulated a great deal of history about Canada and Canadians through its postage stamp designs.

R.E. Bowley,
Peterborough,
Ontario.

West is East

An avid reader of *The Beaver* for nearly twenty years, I look forward to each new issue of your magazine.

I was surprised to find an error in the April/May 1995 issue. On pages 4-5 the caption, incorrectly, says, "Captain Mulcaster's party is seen attacking the fort on its western side." Since the painting of the action clearly looks south from Lake Ontario to the mouth of the Oswego River and since the fort is on the left (eastern) bank, the troops must be on the fort's east side.

Paul Harris,
Syracuse, New York.

English Lesson

Belatedly, I came across the letter by Ronald Cantlie in your November 1994 issue. In his informative letter about the initials R.C.N.V.R. there is a slip of the pen, which in no way, though, invalidates his research.

Explaining that the N. stands for Naval, not Navy, modifying the R./Reserve, he says "one noun cannot qualify another."

It is one of the strong points of English that nouns can qualify nouns. Cantlie uses no fewer than six in his short letter: peacetime, merchant navy, fishing fleet, seamen, World War, rank stripe. The language has thousands in common use and makes up ad-hoc ones every day.

Navy usage illustrates another delightful feature of English: it can be entirely illogical and right all the same. We refer to a ship by "she" and "her". A merchantman is a ship, ain't she, and a man-of-war is equally sure of her own gender.

Herman Kirchmeir,
Edmonton, Alberta.

Not Actually Intended to Bore

A colleague has drawn my attention to the comments on the Ontario Historical Studies Series in Christopher Moore's article entitled "An Historical Grab-Bag" [*The Beaver,* February/March 1995].

As the former editor-in chief of the series I am grateful for Mr. Moore's complimentary assessment of some volumes in the series. My colleagues and I were not aware that the first publications in the series "soon earned a reputation for absolutely stultifying boredom". Our authors were expected to write for the literate general reader as well as for scholars. On the whole, I believe they met this criterion. I am more concerned, however, about some of the misconceptions that have crept into this article.

Floyd Chalmers and Leslie Frost promoted the writing of Ontario history and the preservation of our historical records. The Series was initiated in 1971 by Premier John Robarts in consultation with the Hon. William Davis, then Minister of Education and University Affairs, Dr. J. Keith Reynolds, secretary of the Cabinet, and Dr. Murray Ross, former president of York University, and Floyd Chalmers. The initial order-in-council, dated 12 April 1971, charged the Series' Board of Trustees "to ensure that a comprehensive program of research and writing in Ontario history is carried out." The board was to secure "recognized scholars to undertake research and writing on the life and times of those who have occupied the office of Prime Minister of Ontario as well as into such related topics of history as may seem appropriate."

Mr. Moore has stated correctly that "the OHSS mandate was almost completed when the NDP government laid it to rest in 1993." It should be added, however, that from 1983 onward the board was committed formally to finishing its task by a specific date. Successive governments extended the deadline to enable the Board to effect publication of the remaining approved works in the Series. The board requested a further short extension for this purpose in 1992 and 1993. The Ministry (Culture, Tourism and Recreation) decided, however, that the Board must be dissolved effective 31 August 1993. The Ministry did agree, nevertheless, to provide funds for publishing all those manuscripts which had been approved by the Series' editors at that time. Thus, since August 1993 six volumes have been published; one is in production at present and will appear later this year; the final work will be published early in 1996. The board had no plans to continue the Series.

I hope that Mr. Moore and you will find these comments helpful.

Goldwin S. French,
Editor-in-Chief,
The Ontario Historical Studies Series,
Toronto, Ontario.

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When National Myths Collide

According to John Cadwalader (letter June/July issue) American schoolchildren are being taught that the War of 1812 was caused "largely" by British impressment of American seamen. The declaration of war passed Congress on a badly divided vote (79 to 49 in the House and 19 to 13 in the Senate) and the vote split along regional lines. This provides a most unusual opportunity to analyse the actual causes of this war. Impressment of American seamen was a matter that directly affected only the seafaring population. These of course lived exclusively on the Atlantic coast, and mostly in New England. Furthermore the New England states run back inland only a short distance, so that a high proportion of their population earned their living from the sea. The Southern states run back a long way from the sea, and seafarers accounted for a much smaller proportion of the population. The three recently formed Western states, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, were landlocked beyond the Appalachians, 300 miles or more from the sea.

If impressment were the cause of the war, one would expect support for the war to be very strong in New England, weaker in the South, and tepid in the West. What we actually find is the precise opposite. New England voted heavily against war, the South voted for it by 2 to 1, and the West voted for it unanimously. In short, this explanation of the causes of the war does not stand up to even the simplest scrutiny. It is just not consistent with the data. Why are American children being taught it?

The voting pattern shows that the real cause of the war has to be something that primarily affected the West. That something was the Indians of the Old Northwest. Prior to 1763 it had been the French in Canada who had been trading with them. After 1763 trade with them continued through Canada. The new British administration there regarded these Indian territories as their market and were highly incensed when, in 1783, the British government agreed to a border which gave it to the Americans. The Americans regarded the area, not as a market, but as a source of vacant land to expand into. To the Americans, the Indians were savages to be extirpated, which leads in the end to "The only good Indian is a dead Indian". To the British, the Indians were consumers to be traded with, which can be encapsulated as "The only useful Indian is a live Indian". Not a high-minded attitude, but it is at least harmless. Try plotting on a map of North America the locations of all massacres of Indians carried out since 1783 by the forces of government, or with government approval, and you will see what I mean.

Talk of war had begun in America in 1807 as retaliation for the British Orders-in-Council of that year which declared a blockade of continental Europe, which was by then firmly under Napoleon's control. Such a war would obviously involve an invasion of Canada. The British, realizing they would need help to repel it, added arms and ammunition to the shopping list they offered the Indians. To the Americans, the only way to stop this was to grab western Upper Canada and thus sever contact between Canada and the Indians, so this defensive British reaction became itself a new cause for war. And once the war had begun, the hopes of the Canadian colonial administration of getting the border redrawn further south mounted. No British government would accept this as a cause for an offensive war against America; but as a prize to be demanded in a victorious defensive war, they not only would but did. The conduct of the war bears this out. Until its final stages, all the serious land fighting took place in the West, and the Indians flocked to fight for the British.

It also explains the great importance of the control of Lake Erie. The naval battle there was not one "where the opponents were evenly matched", as Mr. Cadwalader thinks. The American superiority in firepower was overwhelming. The damage done by, and also the range of, a gun depended on the weight of the shot it fired. The Americans had forty 32 pounders, as well, of

course, as other smaller guns. The British had no 32 pounders and only twenty 24 pounders; all the rest of its guns were smaller. In the Royal Navy any commander who failed to win a battle with those odds in his favour would be court-martialled. The reason for this American advantage was geographic. By this date the Americans, on the south shore of the lake, had good overland communications with the source of supply, and could bring up guns of any size they wanted. The British, on the comparatively undeveloped north shore, hadn't and couldn't.

As to the outcome of the war, Mr. Cadwalader describes the peace terms as "mainly favourable to the United States". In what way? They put both parties back to where they had been in June 1812. There is only one basis on which the terms of peace can be described as "favourable to the United States", and that is that they got peace without having to give up any territory to do so. They began the war with the object of gaining something, and succeeded in getting out of it without losing anything. And that's a victory? Come, come. At best it's a draw.

Mr. Cadwalader ends with this sentence, "Although this treaty did not mention the issue of impressment, the practice ceased, so I think our claim to victory is justified." *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc.* In fact there is no connection between the two events. The origin of, and justification for, impressment lay in the Navigation Acts. These gave the British merchant navy (which included ships of the colonies as well as the motherland) a great deal of protection against foreign competition. In return for that protection, the merchant navy was required to act as a reserve for the Royal Navy in time of war. In peacetime the Royal Navy was composed entirely of volunteers. The press operated only in time of war and only seamen could be pressed; it was a method of calling up reservists. In 1848 the Navigation Acts were repealed, and the press was abolished since the justification for it had gone. Shortly afterwards began the establishment of naval reserve forces, for which there had previously been no need. The reason there was no impressment after 1814 is simply that Britain was not involved in a naval war between 1814 and 1848.

Ronald Cantlie,
Calgary, Alberta.

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The Atlantic Convoys

I write concerning the article "Gateway to Canada" by Trudy Duivenvoorden Mitic [*The Beaver,* February/March 1995]. This was a very fine article, but unfortunately one incorrect myth was repeated. This is understandable since many truths were covered by the need for wartime secrecy.

On page 11: "Ships went ... always in convoys under protection of the navy (Indeed, only two ships were authorized to travel unescorted; both the *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Mary* were simply too fast for the slower moving convoys.)"

As an RCAF navigator serving with the RAF Atlantic Transport Command at Dorval I had occasion to return from Prestwick via Halifax on board the *Aquatania* and *Nieuw Amsterdam,* also via New York on the *Ile de France* and the *Pasteur.*

These ships, and I am sure there were others, travelled without escort by relying on their speed and by following a southern route to avoid the U-boat packs along the great circle route used by the convoys.

The *Nieuw Amsterdam* which by my calculations should have reached Halifax on 24 December 1944 had to stooge around off the coast as a sub had sunk a navy minesweeper only hours before. During this period we were escorted by a Liberator and a Canso of the RCAF Coastal Command. After they spotted the sub the *Nieuw Amsterdam* streaked for the harbour and we got home to Montreal a day late for Christmas.

Despite the evidence my cabin mates never recognized my navigational skills as our arrival was a day later than I had predicted.

Monte Stout,
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dead in Quebec

Re: John MacFarlane's. "Mr. Lapointe, Mr. King, Quebec & Conscription," [*The Beaver,* April/May, 1995].

The lead photograph in the abovementioned article is captioned as "Ernest Lapointe, lying in state, Ottawa, November 1941".

In fact, the caption should read: "Ernest Lapointe, lying in state, Québec City, November 1941". The potted plants, the pith-helmeted figure in the upper left, and other details point clearly to the Québec Legislative Council Chamber, now the *Salon rouge* as the setting of the photograph.

I have long been a devoted reader of *The Beaver,* and I hope that you will forgive my drawing your attention to what is, after all, a very minor error in your generally superb publication.

Robert W. Reid,
Toronto, Ontario.

CHRISTOPHER MOORE WRITERS OF HISTORY

Making the Past Move Again

In the early 1600s, European diseases struck the 30,000 strong Huron nation of southern Ontario, and half of them died. In the late 1700s, tuberculosis came to the Beothuk of Newfoundland, and by 1830 none remained. In the mid-1800s smallpox devastated the Plains Cree and Blackfoot, and later in the century epidemics brought the Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands to the verge of vanishing. When TB came to the Sadlermiut Inuit of Hudson Bay in 1902, the entire population succumbed in barely a year.

Throughout the five centuries that have followed Columbus's voyage, disease and death have accompanied every "contact" between newcomers and native societies. Until 1492 isolation had protected the Americas from exposure to the disease pool circulating around Europe, Africa, and Asia, but when the isolation was broken, lack of exposure meant lack of immunity. Reputable students of historical populations now estimate the population of North America may have been ten million in 1492, and that it quickly declined by nine-tenths thereafter. And the process continues — the Panara tribe, long isolated in the Brazilian rainforest, lost 90 percent of its members after a road was pushed through their land in the 1970s. Extinction, on a scale barely known anywhere else in the world, is the subtext of all "new world" history. In American historical writer Francis Jennings' phrase, colonists of the Americas came not to a virgin land but to a widowed one.

The mind of the living and the immunized shrinks from contemplating death on this scale. Historians and readers of history alike have had a difficult time comprehending the meaning of such a massive and prolonged cycle of destruction. But consider the story of Coppermine.

In 1910 the Manitoba-born arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson visited the Copper Inuit at the estuary of the Coppermine River on Coronation Gulf in the central Arctic. He brought back both a silly story about Viking-descended blonde Eskimos and a sensible warning that no one should visit the central Arctic without a medical clearance. Pioneer anthropologist Diamond Jenness also visited the Copper Inuit and lived with the family of Ikakuak, whose young daughter Kenneyak took the name "Jennie" in his honour. Jenness too urged the need for medical screenings of visitors in order to protect the Inuit from catastrophic disease.

Instead ships soon began calling at the Coppermine River. Soon there were whalers, Hudson's Bay traders, missionaries, police. Not everyone welcomed them. Two Anglican missionaries were killed on the Coppermine in 1913. Their killers, including one called Uluksak, were among the first Inuit whom Canadian justice arrested, tried, and sent south to jail. With ships arriving at Coppermine each summer, many among the local people got coughs and colds. Mostly they got better as winter returned and the ships departed.

In 1929 the elements of this story began to combine. The HBC ship *Baychimo* delivered a young Canadian government doctor, Russell Martin, to Coppermine. Also aboard were Catholic missionaries who would soon be rivals to the Anglicans already established there. And another passenger was the convicted murderer Uluksak. Uluksak had contracted tuberculosis in his southern jail. Rather than keep a hopeless case in a hospital bed, the crown had sent him home to die. Uluksak was highly contagious during the few months before he died. People who shared the dying man's skin tent got sick, and this time no one got better. Among the first stricken was Diamond Jenness's "little sister" Jennie Kenneyak, by then an adult and the mother of a young child.

The Coppermine sequence differs only in the details from a thousand other instances of how new diseases had been introduced across the Americas. At Coppermine, however, it happened that a doctor was on hand, horrified and almost helpless, but an expert observer of the birth of an epidemic. At first Dr. Martin had to travel 500 kilometres just to send out a radio message, but he began bombarding Ottawa with urgent requests: for aerial delivery of medical supplies, for hospital facilities, for a sunlamp, for any kind of action. A quarter of the Coppermine people had died, he soon reported, and another quarter were infected.

Ottawa, coping with the onset of the Depression, was more bemused than concerned by Dr. Martin's

urgent entreaties. He seems to have been considered a nuisance, and when he travelled south in 1931 to press his case for action he was fired. Around the central Arctic the epidemic ran free. Not until after the Second World War did Canada fight, or even document, the tuberculosis that had taken root in Coppermine in 1929.

I learned this story from a film, *Coppermine*, produced by the North West Centre of the National Film Board in 1992. After a recent column in *The Beaver* in which I was speaking unkindly about the way film-makers treat history, editor Christopher Dafoe drew my attention to a stack of videos from the NFB. The NFB, after all, began doing historical "vignettes" decades before Patrick Watson dreamed up the Heritage Minutes, and its Klondike film *City of Gold* was winning prizes even before Pierre Berton discovered the railway. Should I perhaps have exempted the Film Board from my complaints?

The first of several items I screened, a three-video package called *Before Columbus*, made me doubt it. In 1992 it seemed everyone had to do some kind of commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage, and nearly everyone preferred the point of view of the native peoples of the "new" world over that of the explorers. Ronald Wright's book *Stolen Continents* was probably the best of these responses to the anniversary. The Film Board's *Before Columbus* is one of the weakest.

The makers of *Before Columbus* ranged the Americas to document conquest, dispossession, loss, and resistance among native peoples. With half a world before them, they could not be entirely uninteresting. They introduce us to the Kuna, the Ika, the Miccosuke, and other unfamiliar native nations with startling and diverse experiences. Cree Robbie Niquanicappo, filmed at his kitchen table, is calm and thoughtful and angry all at once. We meet an aged Seminole woman who lived all her life in Florida and never met a white person until 1966.

There's hardly a sentiment in the film I disagree with, and the harsh accusations against all of us as Columbus's heirs ought to be heard. But *Before Columbus* displays all the irritating features of filmed history. Everything it will say is obvious in the first five minutes, but the film drags on for nearly three hours. One clip after another makes exactly the same point without greater depth or subtlety. Narrator Tantoo Cardinal struggles with a script that is flat, unfocussed, and didactic. *Before Columbus* is made in three parts, "Invasion," "Conversion," and "Resistance," but as if to confirm that the Film Board is counting on captive audiences ("Get it into the schools!"), each part abruptly halts in the middle, the better to fit into arbitrary classroom schedules.

Three hours watching *Before Columbus* struggle with two continents and 500 years confirmed all my grousing about history on film always being too long, too preachy, and too cheaply dramatic. The devastation of disease is part of its story — indeed the grim story of the Parana people in Brazil comes from it — but mostly the film numbs us with statistics of disaster beyond comprehending, just one more item on a long agenda.

The Coppermine film makes the same story real. Tightly focussed and specific, it's about the life and death of a handful of people just 65 years ago. Above all, it is a film that works as a film, because it has the materials a film needs. Stefansson took movies of the Copper Inuit he met, Jenness made films, photos, and diaries of Jennie and her family. Even the son of Dr. Martin's boss in Ottawa came to Coppermine with a film camera. The camera can show us Coppermine in 1929 and even let us read the death certificate Dr. Martin wrote for Coppermine's Patient Zero, the convict Uluksak.

Not content with assembling archival films and documents, the makers of *Coppermine* searched out living witnesses to interview on film. We meet Harold Webster, who was Coppermine's Anglican minister in 1930, and Scotty Gall, the cynical, tough-talking Hudson's Bay trader. Even soft-spoken Dr. Russell Martin, elderly but vigorous in retirement in Scotland, tells his own story. Several elderly Copper Inuit recall for the cameras how as young people they happened to survive as all their families died around them. Most moving of all, filmed at the Coppermine cemetery, is Aime Ahegona, whose mother, Diamond Jenness's Jennie, died of spinal tuberculosis when he was three. This apparently forgotten tragedy from the archives turns out to live vividly in all their memories.

Coppermine is hardly innovative as a film, just a carefully crafted documentary which assembles all its elements in simple, effective stages (its one alarming flaw is a brief scene re-created by actors, which abruptly undermines viewers' confidence in the genuine archival footage). But it does demonstrate what good service film can provide to historical understanding when it has the right materials and sticks to what the materials can support. *Before Columbus* demonstrates why over-confident filmmakers who seek to make historical encyclopedias and teach the Lessons of History nearly always fail. *Coppermine* suggests what film that knows its limits and strengths can achieve. ◆

Coppermine, produced by Jerry D. Krepakevich, directed and edited by Ray Harper, based on research by Dr. Walter J. Vanast, is available wherever NFB videos are distributed, as are *Before Columbus* and the rest of the NFB's extensive library of historical films.

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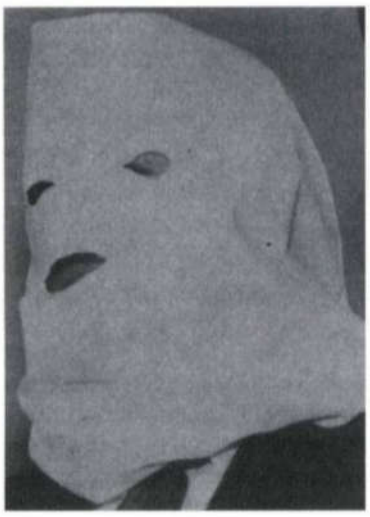

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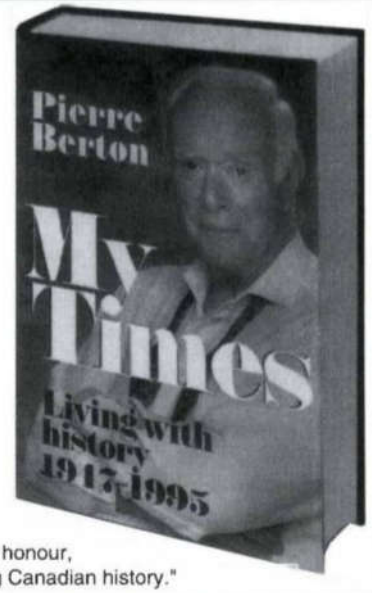

Pierre Berton was the first recipient of the National History Society's award, named in his honour, for "distinguished achievements in popularizing Canadian history."

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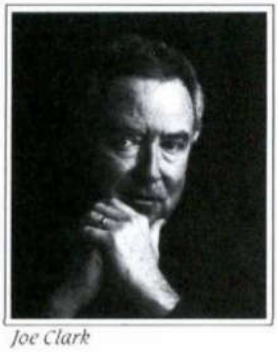

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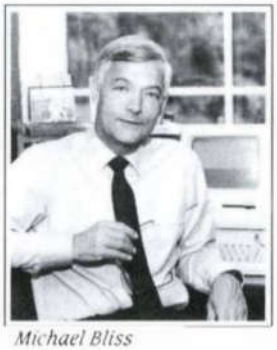

Michael Bliss

Field Work

FIVE PROVINCIAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES across Canada are the beneficiaries of Society support.

In each province, there is a principal, non-profit association devoted to do at the provincial level what the Society is attempting to do nationally, namely to make people more aware and appreciative of their heritage. Beginning this year, the Society is offering up to $5000 a year, for a three-year period, to five provincial historical associations to enable them to enhance an existing program or introduce a new one.

The project is being " tested " with the Ontario Historical Society, the Fédération des sociétés d'histoire du Quebéc, the Yukon Historical and Museums Association, the B.C. Historical Federation and the Manitoba Historical Society. Assuming a positive outcome of these test cases, the program will be expanded next year to include the remaining provinces.

The provincial organizations are using the support in a variety of ways, everything from long-overdue workshops in B.C. on researching and writing local histories, to field-work projects in Manitoba enabling the parent organization to meet with local counterparts on a regular basis, a positive program that had lapsed because of lack of funds. While all the projects have merit, the most ambitious one is in the Yukon where Society support will be used to produce a comprehensive data base identifying heritage structures and sites throughout the territory. The data base would supplement or, in some cases, replace existing but often antiquated or incomplete information scattered among government, non-government agencies and private sources. According to Brent Slobodin, President, YHMA, " The data base would prove timely as the government intends to introduce heritage legislation next fall and having a ready source of information concerning territorial historic sites and buildings would help to facilitate implementation." There is also the possibility of securing funds from the Heritage Branch of the Yukon Government to match the Society support.

YHMA

Arrival and Departure

At the Society's annual meeting in Winnipeg, held on June 11, the Right Honourable Joe Clark was elected to the Board of the Society. Mr. Clark is a former Prime Minister of Canada who now resides in Calgary where, through Joe Clark and Associates, he is associated with Ernst & Young Management Consultants and the Milner Fenerty law firm.

At the same meeting, well-known Canadian historian, Michael Bliss, retired from the Board, having decided not to seek re-election. Mr. Bliss was one of the founding members of the Society. Prior to the establishment of the Society, he was a member of the Beaver Editorial Committee on which he served for some ten years. Bliss is a professor of history at York University and the author of many books, the most recent one being **Right Honourable Men**.

Management Matters

The Board of the Society has approved the appointment of the following officers:

Rolph Huband, former Vice-President and Secretary of Hudson's Bay Company, Society president for a second term.

Christopher Dafoe, Vice-President and Editor of **The Beaver**.

Laird Rankin , Vice-President responsible for non-magazine activities, and Secretary of the Society.

Catherine Kupfer, C.A., Treasurer.

Annual Report

The Society has produced an annual report of its activities for the year ended December 31, 1994 which outlines the considerable progress the Society has made toward its objective of promoting greater interest in and knowledge of Canadian history. Among the Society's achievements during its first year of operation were the acquisition of **The Beaver** from Hudson's Bay Company and the introduction of the Pierre Berton Award for distinguished achievement in popularizing Canadian history. Copies of the bilingual report are available to members upon request.

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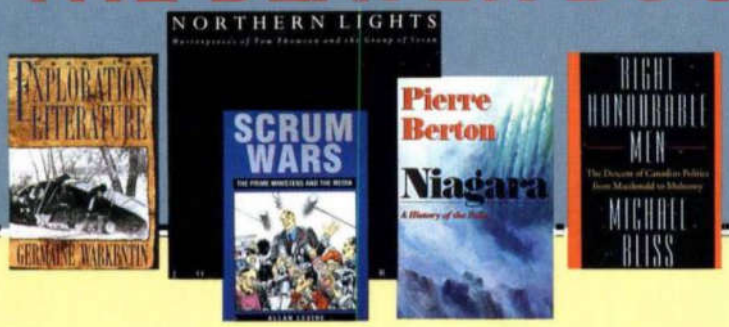

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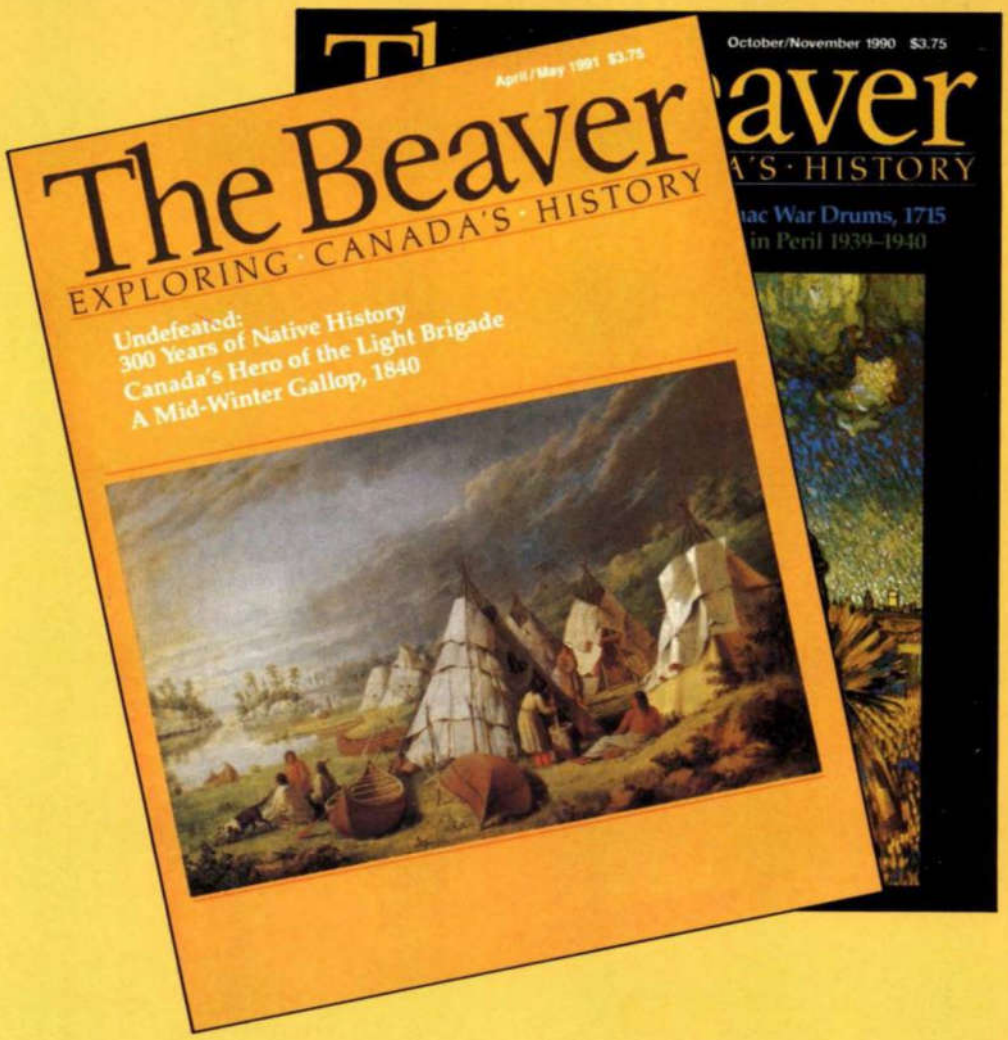

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